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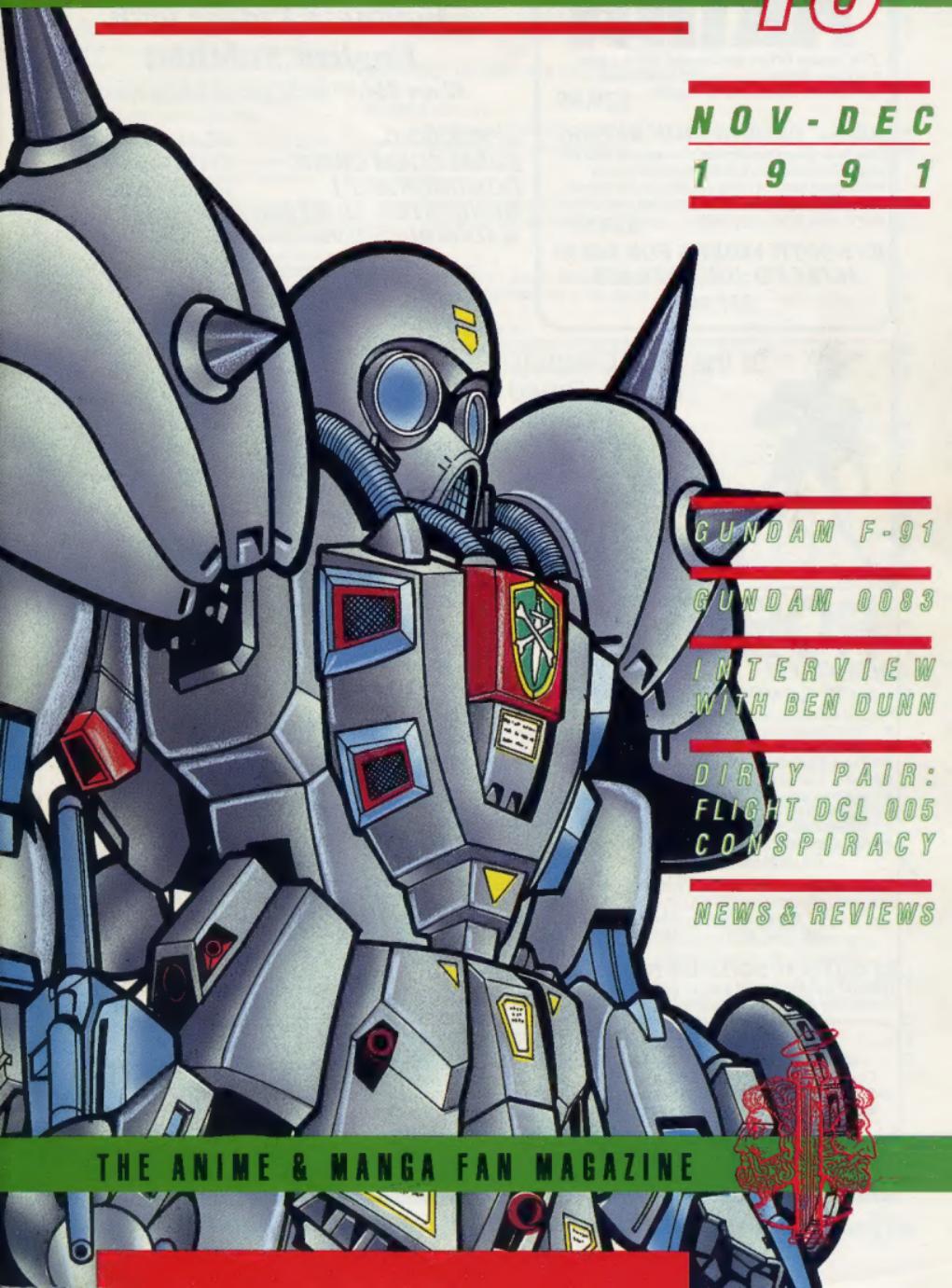
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PRESENTATION

The wind of change is blowing strongly. Again, I feel like being in the Valley of the Wind. It keeps our air clean from the filth of the external world — the mundane one. It also makes the windmill work. Is it mild, pleasant, constant like the Zephyr, or is it strong and mad like the Mistral, it is blowing, bringing life, rumors, and changes. Each morning I climb to the top of the tower and, by the opened window, I listen to its breath. I smell its odor rich of distant lands memories, I let its touch caress my face, its vitality fills the sails of my hopes and dreams. I quiver to the thought that it could die and then jeopardize the very essence of our fragile world. But this fear is ephemeral for I know that our destiny lies in our own hands. We just have to seize the opportunity, harness its stream no matter which direction it takes. Nevertheless, I am worried. Riding the wind of change is not a game and it is not easy. We must feel the wind, know its direction, its strength, adjust the mill for the maximum efficacy to obtain a product corresponding as close as possible to the demand of the

costumers. The perfection (the flour of life!) is never reach and everybody is always complaining. This time, maybe, the wind will be better. We sail a ship that never moves and the responsibilities are heavy for the miller...



AnimeCon brought several new perspectives: lots of news, few contacts, some deals, and a better understanding of the fandom (or, should I say, the market). People were busy, but I felt anxiety behind all this agitation. The market is expanding very quickly and some seems overwhelm, others fear that it could collapse, or are afraid of a Japanese take-over. Even in Japan, there is disappointment and discouragement: the animation has levelled off. It has produced nothing original in a long time. A temporary slack? Or the beginning of the end?

Here we are not worried. There will always be fans. In our new office, we are preparing for the tempest, what ever it may bring. We are shedding our skin and reorganize our staff to double the production. Even if Jean,

Alain and Michel have chosen independent, more stable careers and quit the company (unfortunately at the same time), our agenda is unchanged: bring you the best of Japanese animation. There will still be some unavoidable delays but don't miss our new magazine format next issue!

This time the milling is offering you a feature on the latest Gundam animations: F-91 and Stardust Memories. Along with our regular chronicles, we offer several articles, more reviews than ever, and our traditional load of news. Enjoy!

Claude J. Pelletier



READ/WRITE FERVOR

In this column, I am usually grumbling, whining, groaning, mumbling (and doing other things in "ing"). But for once, something encouraging and positive happened to me, and I feel a need to share it with everybody.

As editor, I receive my share of mail, the good, the bad and the requests. I purr at the first, hiss at the second (who wouldn't?), and (more often than I should) forget the third. In all honesty, I receive too many requests to honor them all. Every year, I clean up the massive stack of mail that hides the door from me (and vice versa) and find out some small gems. Unfortunately, it's often too late for me to send a reply, so they are discarded.

This was not the case with Mrs Chiaverini. Mrs Chiaverini is an elementary school teacher. She felt it was important to have an

incentive reading project for her students and had planned a "Celebrity Auction". Students would be receiving credits for reading books and successfully completing book reports. Those credits were deposited into their "saving accounts" to be withdrawn on "Auction Day", last June. She was asking us for a contribution "to reward these hard working students".

How could we refuse?

I phoned Mrs Chiaverini to know when would that Auction Day take place, to make sure I had enough time to send something. As it was, I had a mere two weeks (my apologies to our American friends, but your mail system leaves much to be desired). I rapidly dug up **very** early issues of *Protoculture Addicts* (#0 and #1, as it is, both of which are normally completely unavailable), snatched a #12, replied to her

letter and mailed the whole package the next day. At the time of this writing (early June), I do not know if she received it or not. But it doesn't matter. Whether she received our package or not, it felt good sending it. We all thought it was a wonderful way of promoting literacy, and there was no way we couldn't be a part of it.

There are two reasons why I'm writing this. The first one is because we want you to know what nice guys we are (we can't be faulted for hypocrisy, can we?). The second reason is because I want the trend to spread. If you know a teacher, or are a teacher yourself, we want you to know that we will *always* be happy to contribute to such projects. We can also safely assume that other publishing companies will follow suit.

Just give us some advance warning.

Jean Carrières

THE VOICE OF THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS

Gundam is the source of the New Type concept. Of course, Tomino has not invented the idea (it has been previously expressed by authors like Nietzsche) but had renewed it in the anime context. The New Types are the members of the new space age generation with an expanded consciousness. No need of psychic powers to be a New Type: just a better comprehension of our world, a certain sense of futurity, which gives them a definite advantage over old types in matter of solving humanity's problems and foreseeing a better future.

Illusion? Hope? Anticipation? Who knows... I believe that there are some young New Types out there, burning to express their view of the world. This is the forum where they can criticize the old type mentality, debate with passion any subject (anime-related or not), respond to a previous letter, comment our work, or bring to us some new enlightenment. And I hope that a new generation of Freedom Fighter will raise among them...

CJP

Dear Folks,

Just wanted to drop a line to tell you how much PA has improved in the last year. The format has gotten cleaner and more professional, the range of topics has expanded beyond Robotech into the much more interesting realm of general Anime, and overall, a greater sense of care fills the pages. Well, a little more care in proofreading and spellchecking would be helpful, and scanning ads into your page layout system is a bad idea (the Books Nippan ad in issue #13 was almost impossible to read! all blurry!), at least until you get a higher resolution scanner or higher DPI output printer. On the other hand, you're clearly limited to what people send you, eh? A bad master can't be magically cured!

Anyway, the main reason for writing is to try to clear up some confusion I have regarding the Endless Road SSX articles by André Dubois. Is he watching the same show I've known and love since 1983? Allow me to explain my confusion, and maybe there is a simple answer to this.

I know that the series *Space Pirate Captain Harlock* was translated into French as *Albatros, the Corsair of Space*. All the names were changed, and new music and sound effects put in place (like Robotech). Also, I understand that some story details were changed, and other just tossed out. I can't provide details, 'cause my French is 100% worse than my Japanese. All I can go by is what older and wiser heads have told me over the years. But in all this time, I had never heard that Endless Road SSX had been translated into French.

So that is the main question. Is Mr. Dubois working from French translation of SSX? If so, what changes were made that might be obvious such as, is he Harlock or Albatros? Is young Monono Tadashi still the non-violent yet

capable mascot/cook? Where ARE the character names? See, I have some problems with the synopsis' lack of detail, but I don't want to go screaming "you're wrong!!" and making page after page of corrections based on an incorrect assumption. If Dubois IS working from a french translation, there may be changes in the story, and he is presenting an accurate synopsis of the french version.

So please help me, and clear up my confusion. To show my interest in helping, please find enclosed a character guide to SSX I did a few years ago. I grant you the right to publish this if you so choose, but please notify me of any changes you may wish to make in advance.

On a totally unrelated subject, I'd like to comment on another book of yours, *Mecha Press*. This is really quite an interesting idea, and it looks like you're off to a good start! Be careful, however, of what your writers use as source material! The Gundam info seemed to come from English on the kit boxes, the 3 Del Rey Gundam novels, and mostly, the Bandai/B-Club book M.S. ERA, most of which seems apocryphal in light of the three "true" Gundam T.V. series. Just, just be careful what you use, o.k. folks! There's a lot of "manglish" (mangled English) out there!

Thank you for your time, and I look forward to continuing growth and improvement. By the way, re. a new name — how about Pro Anime, so you can keep the letters PA for use? Just a shot... (....)

"Vhrlitwai"
the Anime Curmudgeon

Dear V... (Damn! you name sounds Alphacentaurian! Maybe you're knowing my ex-wife? Uh?! My auxiliary brain just reminded me that it's a Zentraedi name. In fact, it's the name of as famous high commander. Your surly highness is back from the death!).

Thanks for your comments. It's very appreciated here. It'd been a long time since someone made a mention of the typos. I was beginning to think that those were almost gone. Oh well, we'll try to stay watchful. PA #13 was made in a rush (I know: it WAS late anyway!) and done by a new printer: so, there are lots of glitches. Scan and output at 300 DPI for now. That's the best we can buy. But we'll be able to switch to a linotype output with the new format. We owe all the improvements to our professional graphic designer but we're limited by our budget. Everything will come in time.

About the Harlock article, you are correct: André's source was indeed the French version. Yet it was faithfully dubbed in French without any alteration in the story, music, or anything else than the names of some of the characters. He had voluntarily omitted the French names until we were provided with the real names. Thank you for having provided this valuable information (we will surely use your episodes

guide in one of our issues. Any contribution is welcome). About doing more detailed scenario of each episode of the saga, it would take more time and space that we have for a single series. The first goal of these articles is to give the fan an overall view of the complete Harlock story.

About Mecha Press, I'll transmit the message to our writers and urge them to be more careful in their research.

You have a good critical sense; I like that. The proposition for a regular—and totally objective—critical chronicle is interesting. As I said, I'm open to any contribution of that kind. I admit that there is a lack of criticism in our reviews. So I hope to read you in our pages soon.

Mr. Carrières.

As I place an order for "Anime Shower Scenes", I would like to respond to you and Helen about this kind of special.

I agree completely that making women objects instead of people, "objectifying" them, is counter-productive on every level. It denies women the freedom and rights which they are naturally entitled to, inhibits their growth and advancement unfairly, and breeds ill-will. Ironically, men stand to lose just as much!

When men choose not to see women as persons, we rob ourselves of their wit, balance, contributions, and of the possibility for the deepest and most satisfying sort of companionship/partnership/interaction.

The ancient Greeks went so far that, to them, women were for procreation and only another man could truly be a lover.

But... Nothing is gained by a reverse stereotype that equates an appreciation of nudes and/or sexuality with an assumed attitude that women are objects. This would divide all males into sensitive eunuchs or hormonally driven monsters.

Moreover, the fear that women's bodies are somehow magically evil and contaminating has long been one of the most powerful tools for subjugating women. Though our own culture is replete with example, one of the best modern examples is the role of women in Iran/Iraq.

At 36, I have spent all my adult life working in gender-equal environments, though my wife has been less fortunate in a different career environment. I feel fortunate to live and work in the much richer environment brought about by men and women (as well as other sorts of dichotomies) working together, so I am deeply grateful to the women's movement. Despite that (or because of that) I am dismayed to see some women equate "Anime Shower Scenes" or "Playboy" with "Hustler" or "Cherry". If we fail to recognize the fundamental difference in attitude between these publications, then we

THE VOICE OF THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS

take away the whole point of there being a different attitude. "Playboy" is one of the most pro-women/ pro-equal rights magazines you can find, and they have work hard to keep their pictorials artful rather than sleazy. No, I don't work for them, or even buy "Playboy" very often, but I respect them.

In short, let's not throw out the baby with the bathwater by over-generalizing.

Dear Protoculture Addicts,

The new format is great, but it looks like an incredibly commercialized mess too. Does that make sense? I believe it does. You have the best news for Japanimation and manga fans, and great interview (when you have them), but I think there are too many elaborate reviews. They are starting to look like promotional ads. I like the news & reviews section, but the detailed reviews take away from the fan aspect of the magazine. Too many design spaces (they take up half the page, if not the whole thing), if you had interviews with the designers or the artists it would be great for these gungumous panels full of too familiar artwork. I wish there were more fan-oriented sections like popular polls, and much longer Voice of the Freedom Fighter sections. I actually do read the letters, because I think that fans do have something to say other than how great your magazine is. Protoculture Addicts has become Protoculture-is-Extinct Magazine.

After all we do pay for this magazine, I don't think we all want to read episode guides to shows we already have seen or comics we own. It get monotonous to episode listings and character listings upon listings upon listings, there is more to following a show or a comic than printing their titles over and over again.

I love the old Japanimation, remember Robotech? Wasn't that a neat show? I think we killed it... not the networks. It became as religious as Star Trek. Robotech everything. We want Robotech underwear, we want more comics drawn by anybody (like the Sentinels) that owns a pencil. Personally, I think that Eternity Comics knew that we would buy anything with the title Robotech printed on it.

I hope Protoculture Addicts doesn't follow the same path. Let's not destroy the reputation of Japanimation. If it can be destroyed. Back to the good old days, why not? What more could a fan ask for than a continuation of his favorite show, but not meaning it is destroyed by poor artists and bad writers. What if, when they resurrected Star Trek, they decided to cut the budget even more, and had different people play Kirk, Spock, McCoy, etc. It would be horrible (if we like the show). How about a new Robotech show animated by the morons who do Masters of the Universe? leave with that and one more thing... With a new format, please take a look at the

good old days when there were no comics and everything we wanted... just the TV show we couldn't wait to see when we got home.

Sincerely,

Doug Wilson
Plymouth, MI

PS: New is nicer, but not exactly better.

Dear P.A.:

Change the name!!! Get rid of Robotech? You filthy rotten beggars! This is exactly the kind of stuff that will murder Robotech! I don't believe you even considered this! Robotech brought you to your proverbial fame and you are going to stab it in the back to satisfy a bunch of money-giving manga rip-offs (Good Lord as if Robotech doesn't have enough problems). Do these people who place ads like Books Nippon and Eternity have anything to do with this? Or is this the conspiracy of Iarus Publications? What ever happened to Robotech? It isn't dead unless we kill it. By saying it you just isn't worth it anymore, it just isn't worthy of promoting the idea you initially created for us: this protoculture addiction that us Robotech fans can't get enough of will kill what we loved so much and thanked you for helping promote. If you stop our Robotech "drug" so quaintly punned upon in your very title, I, maybe we all, will have such mammoth withdrawal symptoms that even goes beyond the limits of a Zentraedi headache, I am going to go to such measures as to cease purchasing Iarus Publications all together and start a boycott of your traitorous mutation of Protoculture Addicts. I don't think my last letter was forceful enough, so I wrote a letter that possibly even Khyron couldn't stand (if he could indeed read).

Well, Protoculture Dealers, if you cease production entirely, that is an acceptable sorrowful put-down, like the Sentinels Series case, which can't be helped, but to change the very fiber of what you started, I certainly hope that if you do, you will get such a cataclysmic amount of letters and threats that the postal service will breakdown.

Remember the Freedom Fighters? Well this one is going to fight you every step of your unfortunate decision... I hope I have soldiers willing to fight with me...

Until the Invid come back,

Doug Wilson
Plymouth, MI

Thank you for your comments, Doug. I will take them in account. I already plan to put more letters, interviews, and probably bring back some "old" chronicles like "Trivia". But you know, we are dependent on the contribution that we receive as we can't write everything in the magazine. Why don't you write some article

yourself? On the other hand, most of the titles we are talking about are not known by everyone (you are lucky if you knew them all). If we publish synopses and reviews, it is to have people discovering those titles, or to give them instruments to better understand them. You will be glad to learn that the change of name is not a definitive decision yet and that we will probably have stuff on the Robotech RPG in our Mecha-Press magazine. About your excessive (but funny) letter you wrote the day after, I can only say that protoculture is more than Robotech. You can find it in any animation if not in yourself.

Dear "PA":

"I'm not much of a letter writer..." I'm sure you get a lot of that so I'll dispense with the pleasantries. I was scanning PA #14 when I came across the little blurb in "Anime Gossips" about Iczer-1 and Iczer-2 ("At least I prefer men..."). Being a lesbian myself, I was somewhat perturbed. Was PA doing a little gaybashing? Perish the thought! I realize that anime isn't the most politically correct hobby for a dyke like myself but I see no reason to sit idly by while somebody insults me and mine. Next time please be a little more considerate of us gay and lesbian fans. (I refuse to believe that I am the only one out here!).

Thanks very much.

I am sorry you felt insulted by a comment in our last issue. I can't talk for our collaborator who wrote the Anime Gossips' chronicle, but I am sure that his comment was not intended as an insult. It was put in the mouth of Iczer-2 to make humor on a fact already present in the animation. There are people thinking like this (this is a reality that we can't avoid) but be sure that we don't share this close-minded mentality. We sincerely think that everybody in this world has rights and that nobody should be condemned, discriminated, or despised because of the color of his/her skin, ideology, belief, sex, or sexual habits. The day people will start trying to understand each other instead of being afraid of their differences will bring a great peace on this world.

I am writing in response to the inquiry done by Books Nippon on the return of Robotech to the airwaves and their impression on it (PA #13).

To begin with, I feel that the people surveyed based their opinion of Japanese animation on premature judgements. These people have seen, what I consider, not to be the best animation done by the Japanese. This is not meant to put down Robotech or any other anime that has been brought to the American market, but better has been produced: Akira, Megazone 23, Macross the Movie, etc. The quality of the

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animation in these films is of the very best and I think that these people should have seen some of these films before making such comments. To compare Disney (and other American animation companies) to Japanese animation is like comparing apples and oranges. Both of these are two unique styles of animation and to say that one is better than the other is ridiculous. They are both equally exceptional in quality.

I would like to direct some of my own comments to the comments of those surveyed. Firstly, a fair amount of those surveyed said that "softer", more "glowing" cartoons are in. I can understand "Muppet Babies" and "Tiny Toons" (which happens to be a personal, all-time favorite of mine) possessing these two qualities, but I don't see what's so "glowing" about four, deformed, quasi-human turtles wielding ninja weapons fighting off ever uglier, more deformed quasi-human beasts shooting at them with laser rifles (or is it machine guns?). Yet, as has been proven many times, it is so popular. Why? Who knows, but it has a lot of kid appeal even though it's not "soft" or "glowing" like the current trend is. Mind-boggling. Secondly, one smart "a**" said that Robotech appealed to "28 year old perverts"!!! Excuse me, but I am not a pervert and I strongly doubt than any other fan is either. Maybe this guy should think about what he is actually saying instead of rambling off anything that he thinks will look "cool" on paper... End of story!! Again, someone else had a stereotypical view of the fans. He point out "the technicians would watch it". Now, I am not a technician, and neither are most fans (my apologies to those who are). I really don't think it's fair to prejudge someone and I am strongly against it (I feel like that on all issues not just this one). Now, this same person said Robotech was a little unusual. I admit, it was unique, but it is no more unusual than four deformed, quasi-humans... well I won't get into that again. I think I've made my point.

All that I'm saying is that these people should expand their contact with Japanese animation and rethink their opinion about.

Faithfully yours,

Filippo Blondi
Sudbury, ON

Remember, Filippo, that those surveyed were programming directors of TV stations and that they have to base their selection on the taste of the general public. Japanimation fans represent a small minority among TV viewers and probably have more severe and precise criteria to evaluate their animation preferences. The general viewers seems to have a lot of prejudices toward foreign animation, prejudices that could be shared by programming directors. People, when they are not despising "cartoons", tends to prefer shows that are either simple, funny, cute, or action-packed (if not violent). "The Simpsons" is a

winner. Japanese and European animations needs a little more maturity to be appreciated. Anyway, I hope that some of those programming guru will catch the message...

Dear Claude and Alain and the rest,

Protoculture Addicts improve with every issue. #14 is the best yet. That's a lovely cover by Gareau. It is much more a *fanzine* than Animag, which is too slick for me. I buy Animag mostly for reference. I'd buy Protoculture Addicts if you change external format, but please keep writing for us, the fans, not a bunch of faceless anime couch potatoes out there. Well, write for them too, but continue to interact with us, as Animag does not.

For Rene Kabis, there is at least one SF convention a year in Vancouver (forgot the name), and anime is probably shown there. BC has at least 2 anime groups, one in Vancouver and another in Victoria. The Sci-Fi channel is having problems getting started, let alone have enough money to underwrite new Sentinels episodes.

Those were excellent BubbleGum Crisis synopses by James Meier. I also enjoyed reading about Ultraman, to never was a fave. Last weekend I ended the Anime Sacramento meeting, driving everyone out by showing a video of Ultra Seven's best fights.

I went to Chicon, met the responsible members of Megazone (not the others who nearly destroyed it), Frank Sewald of the Japanese Animation Movement, the Michigan anime group, Beverly Headley of Minstrel Press, Marg Baskin of Anime House. Haruka Takachiho (Dirty Pair) and Tatsuya Ueno (Locoss Wars) came to the convention, along with about 20 other Japanese fans (of SF, not anime). Getting back to Sacramento, I heard that the AnimeCon committee had tried to get the Red Lion for next Labor Day weekend, but it was unavailable. To continue to hold AnimeCon on Labor Day weekend is an incredibly stupid idea to me. There'll probably be lots of Japanese fans (anime and otherwise) at the Florida worldcon next year, and I know some American anime fans who'll be there, not at AnimeCon if it conflicts. So AnimeCon will probably be over July 4 in San Jose next year, conflicting with the Phoenix WesterCon, and creating a dilemma for the Phoenix fans. I've been in Phoenix in July, and would prefer to be in San Jose next year, not in hot-as-hell Phoenix.

OK, you publish another Shower Special, and I won't criticize it so heavily, if you include some good-looking guys (and it's OK if they're wearing towels).

Laurine White
Anime Sacramento



THE SHAPING OF PROTOCOLTURE

PEN PALS

Sheldon K. Marumoto
27101 Baillif Hall
University of Utah
Salt Lake City, UT 84112

NEW CLUBS

Berkeley High School Anime
Phillip Yee
1733 Bancroft, #3
Berkeley, CA 94703
Meeting: weekly during school session

Japanese Animation Club
of Olympic College
Talun Ting
2419 Rocky Pt. Rd.
Bremerton, WA 98312

Japanese Animation Club
of Orlando (JACO)
Joe Vecchio
P.O. Box 141391
Orlando, FL 32814-1391
(407) 823-9014
Meeting: 2d & 4th Friday
Membership: \$25 1st year, \$10 renew.
Quarterly Newsletter

Melbourne Anime Society
Adrian Pett
P.O. Box 247
Glen Waverley 3150
Victoria
Australia

SOME NEWS

We plan to publish an updated list of the clubs in issue #17. If you want your club to be listed, or want to make an update, please send it to us as soon as possible.

All clubs are maybe not aware that we have an exchange policy with club's newsletter/fanzine. If you are doing a newsletter or a fanzine, send it to us to complete our documentation center and for review purpose. In exchange, we will send to your club a copy of each issue of *Protoculture Addicts*. Also, if there is interesting review, synopses, or articles in your newsletter, we can publish them in PA, giving more publicity to your club and a larger diffusion to your articles. If you are interested in this exchange please send us a letter of agreement stipulating that your newsletter and its contributors (actual or future) accept that we eventually publish their work in PA.

We are actually running an exchange with Minstrel Press, the publisher of *Anime-Zine*. The AZ subscribers are receiving PA instead of the expected magazine. Minstrel Press is having several difficulties and will not be able to publish *Anime-Zine* for an unknown period of time. We hope that the subscribers will find the substitution fair. For people having already subscribed to PA, their subscription will be increased of four issues.

Ianus Publications still need collaborators for its magazines *Mecha-Press* and *Protoculture Addicts*. We are looking for artwork and articles. We are sorry that we can't offer more than a free issue of the magazine (or an extension of your subscription by one issue). Eh! Even we are not paid for this! With a little chance, we will be able next year to pay our collaborators. Thanks for your support. Our magazines are made by you, for you!

For those who sent us letters, I am sorry to say that we can't answer all your letters. Our jobber assigned on mailing left and a new one has just been assigned. We will publish in THE VOICE OF THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS the best letters (that will be once a while rewarded by a promotional price) and those with SASE (Self Address & Stamped Envelope) only will be answered.

We have received some name propositions for PA : Anime Press, Pro Anime, Public Anime, Popular Anime, Anime Addicts (already used, I think), Animagination, Animaniacs, Fanimanga, Fanimation, Manganime. Finally, we have decided not to change our name (at least for now) because no new name have raised our enthusiasm.

Claude J. Pelletier

ERRATA: in last issue, we published Force Ten Anime address and misspelled the name of its president: it's Gene LAURO (sorry, Gene). Their new address is: P.O.

MECHA•PRESS

The Magazine on Mecha in Anime, Manga, Gaming & Model Kits

Mecha•Press has been delayed because of several changes in the company. DON'T WORRY, it will be back in 1992 with a better look since we had more time to re-think and improve its design. It is now 9 1/4" x 12" with COLOR cover, B&W inside, and 36 pages.

#2 (Patlabor) is coming next month!

A new & Improved #1 (Gundam MS) will follow soon after

1 issue: \$5.75 US, \$6.42 Can (GST incl.), \$6.50 US oversea
Subscription: \$25 US, \$29.96 Can (GST incl.), \$32 US oversea

Ianus Publications

2360 de LaSalle Ave., #211, Montreal, Qc., Canada H1V 2L1

- It has just been announced that C-Ko Kotobuki will be a contestant in an upcoming BETTY CROCKER baking contest. To play it safe, an emergency medical team will be on location in case any of the judges suffer food poisoning.
- The father of famed inventor B-Ko Daitokuji is reportedly recovering from a severe back injury but now faces a copyright infringement lawsuit filed by his own daughter in regards to the AKAGIYAMA 23 battlesuit and other devices that she claims he stole from her.
- Speaking of lawsuits, the Voltron Lion Force has filed one against Governor Hordak of Etheria -- also for copyright infringement -- because they feel that his methods of shape changing and weapons replication too closely resemble the way the weapons on their lion ships operate. Responded Governor Hordak: "Horde commanders take what they damn well please! Just because they defeated a couple of losers like Zarkon and Lotor doesn't mean that they can boss the Horde!"
- And speaking of Etherians, Hordak's old adversary She-Ra is having problems of her own as she was recently arrested for causing a riot at Bright Moon's HARD ROCK CAFE when she was refused admittance on "Anime Females' Night." "Just who the hell do they think they are!?" exclaimed She-Ra. "Why, they even let 3WA agents into that place, so don't tell me they have any standards!"
- Princess Kahn and Lum "the Notorious" are themselves filing a lawsuit. The pair claim that *People* magazine referring to them as "those horny alien broads" is misleading and they are demanding a retraction. "It's bad enough being called an 'electrocute' all the time," added Lum.
- As reported in *Anime Gossip* Volume #2, the makers of Armor-All protectant got Cobra officer Destro to promote their product by demonstrating its usefulness in keeping his chrome face mask shiny. However, the advertisements have had even greater impact than hoped for by AMOR-ALL. To capitalize on this new sales boom, the company is hiring additional spokespeople, including (as expected) the Cobra Commander, the ninja renegade known as the Shredder, and sometimes Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle ally Casey Jones.
- Sadly, we have more trouble to report for the hard-luck former athlete and actress—Iczer-One. Despite her vow that she would never again appear in a feature film, she has recently agreed to playing her former role in the upcoming O.A.V. series "Iczer Three." Says Iczer-One: "The Buccaneers used me, then waived me - the bastards - and the only offer I got since then was to appear on 'Wayne's world!' I had hoped that at least the conditions on the set would be better this time - since at least they have not brought back that bitch Iczer-Two yet - but now I have to play second banana to an obnoxious little brat!"
- It just may be that Iczer-One's remark about her young co-star is appropriate, as it has since been learned that Iczer-Three is dating Bart Simpson.
- Concerning the "Iczer-Three" series, we at *Anime Gossip* would like to express our **outrage** over A.I.C. changing Iczer-One's original costume, surely one of the greatest uniforms anime has ever seen! What's **next** for A.I.C. - painting a mustache on the Mona Lisa?
- Olympus E.S.W.A.T. member Briareos has been chosen as one the models for a new line of clothing designed especially for cyborgs. When asked why he agreed to participate in this, Briareos answered that specialized clothing for cyborgs was long overdue and that he was glad to help promote it. "Just check out this jacket," he said. "It's the latest thing for the stylish robo-rabbit!"
- Ayukawa Madoka is reportedly seeking admission into the Knight Sabers, saying that if current members Linna Yamazaki and Nene Romanova can make the grade, then surely she can.
- Channel 6 reporter April O'Neil - long known for her unusual and offbeat news features - has angrily denied reports that she is dating one of the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. "I am getting sick of guys' remarks about this," Ms. O'Neil says, "such as 'Hey, April - what are those bruises you have - shell marks?' The Turtles are just friends who I do stories on and split a pizza with sometimes."

THOUGHTS FOR THE DAY

- In all fairness, shouldn't the ARMORED DEFENSE POLICE of Mega-Tokyo at least give their men weapons that could actually stop a boomer?
- Gentlemen: beware of cultural difference when dating Zentraedi women. Avoid playing even the friendliest of game with them unless you know **exactly** what you're doing. If you hurt their feelings, it could be bad for both of you.

Edited by Michael Birchfield
Reported by Michael Birchfield
and Kevin Kinne

INTERVIEW

BEN DUNN

This interview was realized last Spring at Project A-kon 2 in Dallas.

A.D.: What brought you to Japanese animation, and to what extent are you still in it these days?

B.D.: My interest in animation in general started the same way it happens for everyone: When you are very young you watch your first animated film or TV show and you instantly fall in love with the character designs and the drawings, and the way they can make it move is always fascinating. As far as Japanese animation is concerned, I had been exposed to it (just like most people have, I am sure) through TV syndicated shows brought over from Japan. But at the time, very few of us really understood whether or not it was from Japan, whether or not we really cared. It was not until much later that we found out there was more of this stuff, but in a different language.

My first exposure was when I joined the CFO back in 1979, when they were just getting started. My interest in Japanese animation grew, and then gradually I got into manga. Back then it was difficult to get any type of material. Back in the old days, I remember (it is ten years ago, but I consider it the old days for Japanese animation in America) we were lucky to even get any type of tape from Japan. The place I was going to was the Austin CFO club. The guy who was running the place would get copies of tapes that were fourth or fifth generation, and back then the VCRs were not that good. We would get copies that had horrible shakes, but we still watched them because it was Japanese animation. No one could get it; we had to watch it however bad a shape it was in. Right now a lot of fans are really picky; if it is not off laser disc, if it is not first a generation copy, they will not even touch it. If it's second generation copy, they will not even want to hear it. I find that kind of ironic.

Regardless of that, I am still very much interested in Japanese animation and manga, but I have also become more interested in animation in general. I even want to do my own animation, influenced by Japanese stuff. I came to the conclusion that all animation is really

good. No matter what it is, it takes a lot of time and effort to make things move, and actually my continuous exposure to Japanese animation has got me to appreciate more animation in general from all over the place. Actually, I do not know whether this is a trend or not, but I am very disappointed about most of the shows that are coming out from Japan now. With a few exceptions, most of them seem aimed at very young kids.

A.D.: What are the exceptions?

B.D.: Recently I would say *Nadia, Secret of Blue Water* and *Ranma*. I do not know how mature *Ranma* is if I consider the commercials showing... Those two are the exceptions and I think they are the two shows that seem to be real popular among anime. Most of the directors who used to direct really ground-breaking shows in the mid-80' moved on to OVAs and movies because there's more money and more creative freedom. But back in the mid-80' we had really good shows like *Hokuto no Ken*, *SSX*, *Cats Eye*, *City Hunter*, and many other ground-breaking shows for animation, like *Macross* (of course!).

I consider myself a product of the pre-*Robotech* revolution as far as Japanese animation was concerned. When *Robotech* came out, it came out at a great time, because VCRs were on the increase, they were getting more available and cheaper. *Robotech* at the time was unusual, so a lot markets picked it up not really knowing what it was about. The *Transformers* were doing well, so, "Hey, it's about transforming robots—let's go ahead and get *Robotech*". And when they found out, "Oh my God! It's got a story and characters and plot! We can't show this to the kids; there's no way they will understand this kind of stuff..." In my market, they put *Robotech* in a really good time slot, and then they pushed it back in the early morning until they finally pushed it so far back in the early morning... Usually it is what happens to a lot of shows they feel are controversial. Lots of studios would push it back into a time slot where the kids can get up early to watch it and the parents are still asleep so they do not complain.

The thing that I find interesting is that a lot of people who got into Japanese

animation after *Robotech* don't bother to discover where Japanese animation come from (you know, the roots of Japanese animation). They just try to create their own little group and try to get what is new without really discovering where all this stuff came from. Most of the stuff I have seen is influenced by the animation that came right after *Macross*, when the OVA became more and more prevalent. That is why I am kind of surprised that *Captain Harlock* still has some identifiability to a lot of people, because a lot of your fans don't know what *Captain Harlock* is. I am hoping that fans will decide that there's more to Japanese animation than the stuff that is coming out nowadays. The thing is that Japanese have always improved on certain things. They took liberties with animation; they took it to its extremes. The problem with Japanese animation is they still haven't gotten character animation to a science. That's something Disney has. Disney is a master at character animation.

A.D.: Characters and animals also.

B.D.: Yes, both. The problem that I have with Disney is that technically it's pretty to look at, but realistically it's not really impressive. Disney is a great studio for doing what it does, but you could not get them to do *Akira*. They simply could not do *Akira*.

A.D.: They have difficulties getting out of kid stories, happy endings, and stuff like that...

B.D.: *Akira* is a demanding type of movie. It's realistic with dark setting. It has a lot of mood and very strong emotional characters. Disney animators are not good at that. They cannot portray realism. They cannot do things realistically.

A.D.: Maybe a sign of that is how they changed the storyline of *Little Mermaid* with a happy ending. They could not keep the sad ending of the original Andersen story. The Japanese did the *Little Mermaid* first, and they put the story like it was originally.

B.D.: Sure, there's a reason for this: nobody will pay good money for a sad ending. The kids will say: "Why does she die? What happened to her?"

A.D.: The Japanese seems to be OK with that. Death seems more acceptable...

B.D.: All these countries (Europe and Japan) are old countries, and they know all about death. The United States has had its share of death, but it's a real young country and has grown so fast it has not experienced all the problems other countries faced in the past. Americans are still fickle about death and fundamental things and ideas and such. Americans for the most part are really simple people. They like things simple. They don't like things too complex.

A.D.: A good example of this is movies. If you compare American movies and European movies, it is just not the same mood.

B.D.: No, it is not the same mood. Despite what everyone thinks about American movies, I think they make some of the best movies in the world.

A.D.: As far as entertainment is concerned.

B.D.: You know, artistically (of course nowadays it may not be so true), there's still a few mavericks out there, American film makers who still make films for art's sake, who make it for their own purposes. But movies now have become such a question of money. When you involve money, art goes out the window. If you do things for money only, then no matter what you would create, it will only be for the purpose of making more money. I could do things strictly for money, but what's the sense? There's no purpose. I would not be happy. I would be happy to be paid a lot if I did something, but I would not be happy with what I would have done. In the end, it's whether or not you are happy rather than how much money you make that counts.

Back to animation... The Japanese, technically, are really good at technical and realistic animation. I am really looking forward to seeing *Little Nemo*. I haven't seen it yet, but I have seen some previews and clips, and it looks very Disneyesque. But there's Japanese realism in it, so this could be a groundbreaking film and perhaps Japan has finally been able to master character animation. I have not seen it yet so I cannot say, but just based on what I have seen so far, it looks very impressive. I'm hoping that it's something that is

actually going to be a trend in Japanese animation. I have noticed that they put a little more emphasis on character. But animation is expensive and no matter what happens it's always going to be expensive. They're always going to find ways to cut back. The Japanese have done it rather cleverly. They made the drawings look so nice and beautiful that, looking at it, you fail to notice that there's really not much to the animation itself. They are really not moving all that much. But they know how to design characters.

Hanna-Barbera once said: "We saved animation by doing limited animation." I disagree with that statement. I believe they created a stigma of animation by doing that. And now all people are exposed to the type of limited animation that Hanna-Barbera have been turning out for the last 25 years. But it's getting better. I think that they realized that in order to compete, they've got to do better. The Japanese are a competitive people; they like to take things that are already established and see if they could do them better in some way. As far as original thinking is concerned, it has only been recently that they have started doing things originally. If they can start showing that they can be as creative as they are innovative, then Japan will be a country really to be watch out for. I know that Disney is trying to do that. They are trying to revive the art of the classic animation style. That is one of the reason why Don Bluth left. Disney was forsaking its classic animation style. I think they've brought it back in some aspects. When I look at a Disney film, it just does not grab me the

way Japanese films do. I don't know why. It is probably because everything moves too much. Maybe for children (they can follow everything) it might work, but since I'm not a kid any more, I look with a more critical eye at Disney animation. I think that animation from the early days was better because they actually spent more time setting up scenes, more time creating mood, more time in character and action. With Disney animation everything is moving so fast it is hard to follow. It seems like they just want to do as many drawings as possible...

A.D.: They put stress on special effects, a lot of "show" and not much depth...

B.D.: That's exactly right. Also, Disney is afraid to experiment storywise. They are returning back to the old simple storylines and such. It is very funny, because I ran a preview of some of the films that are coming out, and there is one called the *Jungle Emperor*, about this lion who is an orphan brought up to be the King of the Jungle. Well, that sounds very similar to Tezuka's *Kimba the White Lion*. It would not be too bad if they were doing two types of animation, one for children and one for a little bit older crowd. Or experimental animations to allow animators to experiment with different things. It would also be good if they could acknowledge that the Japanese are good animators. The Disney people seem to ignore everything from Japan. They pretend it doesn't exist. To them, the only type of animation is Disney animation.

A.D.: I saw reviews from TV stations. Directors of programming having this attitude, saying



Ben Dunn working on his contribution to the *Anime Shower #2* at Project A-Kon 2

INTERVIEW

they don't need Japanese animation because Disney and Fox are there and that's enough.

B.D.: Exactly.

M.C.: Doing *G.I. Joe* and the *Mutants*...

B.D.: They do not realize those are all Japanese (laughs)... Actually, did *Beetlejuice* start in Canada?

A.D.: I don't know...

B.D.: It was done in studios in Canada. One Canadian feature film that I liked was *Rock and Rule*. Storywise, it was not a great film, but technically it was an incredible film, one I consider a synthesis of the techniques of Japanese animation and North American character animation. It was ground-breaking in that aspect. The problem with *Rock and Rule* is that they didn't know what they wanted it to be. They did not know if they wanted it to be a serious film that could attract their older audience, or if they wanted it to be a kid's film. There are lots of kid's jokes in there. There are a lot of things that are characteristics of a kid's film, but also a lot of things that are characteristics of an adult film. The people could not decide which way they wanted it to go. That's the problem: Distributors will not carry animated films if they are not intended for children. That is the big problem. Considering the small promotion it had, *Akira* did pretty good. If it had the right promotion, a wide release, and if maybe the dubbing was better, it probably would have done very well. *Heavy Metal* proved that there's a market for animation meant for adults.

A.D.: Film distributors are so picky on that kind of stuff...

B.D.: In the United States, everyone wants to control too much. Because they want to control so much, they dictate what you can and cannot do. It's the same in comics, comic distribution, comic retailing, movie distribution—everyone is greedy and they want to get more than their fair share.

A.D.: So they are caging the creators...

B.D.: They have to do something that they consider sellable. I do not believe in that philosophy. I believe that you create something that might eventually become sellable, not that has to be already sellable.

A.D.: That's why you founded Antarctic Press, I guess. Not to be caged by someone else...

B.D.: Eternity Comics was that at the beginning. I still cannot figure out some of their editorial policies. It is real confusing, so I basically do the books the best I can and let them handle all the production and stuff like that. To give you an example, I am right in the middle of doing some licensing — *Ninja High School* licensing. My interpretation was that I would be able to keep the original look of the characters. That was very important to me, personally. But as things went on, they kept asking me to make more and more changes to the characters. Finally, they simply said: "The people we are dealing with are people with small minds and narrow perceptions". If it is something that they cannot sell immediately, then they are just not interested or they will ask you to change it so that it is sellable. A good example of that is the *Turtles*. Compare the merchandized version to the original comic version and the only similar thing I see is the four turtles. Other than that they are totally worlds apart. It's just unusual that the United States are still locked in that, while Japan and Europe are not. You either respect the original creation or you just do not do it at all. Sometimes they will make changes, but for the most part the creators do whatever they want. They left the product stand and die based on its own merits, not because someone else has a vision on it. You give something to somebody and he changes it so that they think it is sellable, and it flops. Who's fault is it? Is it the creator's fault? You never know, but he gets the blame. *Ranma*, when it first came out, didn't do very good in the ratings. It was really on the verge of being cancelled, mainly because, to Japanese audiences, which it is aimed at... (It is not aimed at us. A lot of people here perceive Japanese animation from an egocentric point of view: "Why do the Japanese do this?" Because THEY want to see this! You have no choice! Until Americans will accept Japanese animation or will see a market for it here, there will be no way to dictate whether or not they will produce any kind of material. Like *Dirty Pair* — incredibly popular here, but it failed

miserably in Japan. Nobody in Japan cared about *Dirty Pair*, but here it is of tremendous popularity).

A.D.: Yes, but I know that for a lot of Japanese shows, when we finally can understand the dialogues (either by subtitled or dubbing or whatever) we realize that some of the stories are pretty poor. The Japanese people ought to know that.

B.D.: So why are they so popular here?

A.D.: A lot of people just care for the look. They only have a synopsis; they do not understand that much about the story. They go for the character designs, the action...

B.D.: There you go, you hit a nail on the head!

A.D.: Great look, story a little weak but...

B.D.: They do not care about the story. I care about story even if I do not understand Japanese that well. In fact I cannot speak any of it. If the story is good, I can follow it without having to understand Japanese, because the Japanese are so good at that. If I cannot follow the story at all and I still find it interesting, then I go out and try to find what it's about. The reason why Miyazaki is so popular is because he is a great storyteller. You don't have to speak Japanese to appreciate what's going on.

A.D.: I guess the looks- and the action-oriented series are the most attractive for the public here. If you take a show which has a lot of talk and not much action, it could have problems breaking through here. Take *Maison Ikkoku* episodes without any script, nothing. Look at them and you probably would not be attracted, but it's terribly good!

B.D.: It is, once you've found out what's going on.

A.D.: The dialogues are so great. I just saw the movie yesterday with the subtitles and it was tons of fun.

B.D.: I am guilty of that, actually. I did not like *Maison Ikkoku* when it first came out, because I couldn't understand what was going on. Finally someone showed a bunch of subtitled episodes, and I realized it was a GREAT series. But before then I would not have given *Maison*

Ikkoku a second glance. I guess subtitling now is changing the perception of a lot of persons towards Japanese animation. But unfortunately, most of the subtitling goes for stuff which is really popular or has a very large following. I am doing my own subtitling, too, but I am subtitling stuff that nobody has given a second glance. I am a big fan of *Conan*, one of Miyazaki's very early TV series. It is a very good series. It looks like a kid's show, but storywise it is very heavy because it deals a lot with war, pollution, technology, and nature. Those are the types of themes which are not covered very well by the American animation.

A.D.: They rarely make you think...

B.D.: That's right, they only make you think about Good versus Evil.

A.D.: That is not much to go on.

B.D.: No. Unfortunately, it's the creators' version of Good versus Evil. It's always a simplified Good versus Evil. In Japanese animation, a lot of times, the good guys can be just as bad as the bad guys, and the bad guys can be good guys.

A.D.: So, sometimes there is not just Good and Evil but simply different interests. That is much more than what we have in American shows where good is always the better, never gets harmed. This is not a good exposure for kids.

B.D.: Especially in violent shows. If you've got to portray violence, portray violence.

A.D.: With all its effects, bad effects on everyone.

B.D.: Exactly. This is why a lot of stations were nervous about purchasing *Robotech*, because when people got shot, they got killed. I heard also that the relation between Roy Fokker and Claudia was very controversial, too, because there was this interracial romance. They felt kids would not understand that. I think it is more a prevailing fear that the people who are racists will object to it, because, to be honest, anybody who is not racist should not be offended by it. I am accusing people who think that's bad of being racists, because they are. If they think they can shut the kids' eyes to that, they are sadly mistaken, because it is just part of human nature.

A.D.: I don't think there is any justification to be against that.

B.D.: Absolutely.

A.D.: No rational one.

B.D.: They were trying to tell a love story about two people who loved each other, instead of two people hating each other like in so many of the children's shows. It seems like they are more willing to accept hate than they are to accept love. It's kind of unusual.

A.D.: Like they are more willing to accept violence than nudity. It's kind of scary to me. I still don't see any valid reason for this.

B.D.: Of course, Japan is guilty to some extent for that. But at least they have balanced it out with other things. At least everyone is allowed to tell his own story. In United States you tell one story and that's it, no matter what story it is. A thing about Disney's animation series is that they deal with anthropomorphic animals. It is hard to really dwell into that kind of thing, because you're not dealing with real people.

A.D.: People with "real" lives, which is frequent in Japanese animation.

B.D.: I belong to an APA, and we were discussing about the new Disney movie *Rescuers down under*. It was not a bad film. I liked the character designs. I am a big mouse fan... I noticed that all the characters in *Rescuers down under* were White. I am not saying that this was wrong, but this is Australia, and it was taking place in the Outback. My perception of people living in the Outback is that they are mostly Aborigines. Disney failed to even include an Aborigine in any of the characters' scenes. None at all. Not even the bad guy was an Aborigine. Anyway, they would have had a big uproar about that if they did that. The main character was White, the bad guy was White, everyone was White. Even the mice were White. Even their guide was White, represented by a White Australian accent. I was discussing this, saying that Disney is guilty of racism. They do not include minorities as characters in their animated films. Some replied: "if you think that is bad, then the Japanese are even worse". I disagree with that, because they do not have a history of civil rights;

America does. Japan is a homogeneous society. America is not. Disney has been doing that for fifty years. The Japanese are doing animation for 35 or 40 years. In fact, Disney has been there for more than 60 years. I still have yet to see a single film where the main character was not White. Maybe the *Jungle Book* but they did not put enough in it to make him any different than if he was a White character. The Japanese are putting more and more minority characters.

A.D.: Nadia...

B.D.: Nadia is a good example of that. Exactly. Because they realize that Japan has more and more global responsibility. So what they're trying to do is expose their children now to different races and different cultures. I think they are looking at the long term. If they expose their children to different cultures and races, they will more readily accept them. As far as Disney films are concerned, show me a film where the characters were not White or acting White.

A.D.: I think it is a way to be conformist, which is very annoying.

B.D.: Absolutely. They are just happy with the status quo. All their films are aimed at a White middle class. That is, the ones with all the money. Disney is a corporation and they're just interested in making money, and more so now. My brother watched that 50th anniversary of Disney. They're trying to whitewash all the stuff they are doing. I do not agree with that kind of stuff, because there is a lot of stuff they made in the 70's that I really liked. They were influential on my creation of *Ninja High School*. I liked the Dexter Reilly films and such. They just totally neglected that. They also are a very closed shop. Unless you really have incredible qualifications or you know somebody, it is very difficult to come in as a maverick. You cannot come in and say, "Well I want to take this approach to this animation. Can you help me?" They will say, "No, no... You go ahead and do it on your own". This is just my impression on the Walt Disney company.

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Interview made and transcribed by Alain Dubreuil. The end of this interview will be published in PA #16.

Felicitation Ben for having *NHS* animated by the Japanese!

INTERVIEW

FREDERIK L. SCHODT

PA: Mr. Schodt, you are mainly known for your novel translations...

FS: The only novels I did were the *Gundam* books. I've also worked on Riyoko Ikeda's *The Rose of Versailles*. It's one of my favorite comics. I've translated two volumes into English. It is really sad to me because after two volumes they decided there was not enough market. So, it ended. I've also worked on *Barefoot Gen*. A friend [Jared Cook] and I translated the second volume. The first one was done by a team of many people. Last year, I did Osamu Tezuka's *Crime and Punishment*. It's not widely available here, for it was done in Japan for people studying English. You can get it in Kinokuniya book stores, and probably Books Nippan. I worked also as consultant for Osamu Tezuka's *Phoenix* 2772 film. I didn't work on the translation of that though, I was just an advisor.

PA: And you have your own books, *Manga!*, *Manga!* and *Robot Kingdom*.

FS: Right. And I work now on a book with a friend [Leonard Koren]. It's called *Eccentric Japanese Comics*. We're contracted to do that for Pantheon Books in New York. But there've been a lot of problems with the publisher, so I'm not sure exactly what status have that project. I hope it will come out next year. It's 85% done.

PA: It must be a big job.

FS: Yes. But not so difficult. It's suppose to be an anthology...

PA: Eccentric. In the sense of... weird?

FS: Yes. The sort of stuff that you will never see at AnimeCon, Books Nippan, or Kinokuniya.

PA: What would you say to introduce yourself to our readers?

FS: What would you suggest I say? (Laughs). I like Japanese comics... (Laughs). I live in San Francisco. I lived in Japan several years. I lived all over the world. I never lived in France (Laughs).

PA: What is your background?

FS: How I make a living, you mean? What's my real job? (Laughs) I am living as an interpreter. I am a writer and I am a translator. That's the three hats I wear in real life. Most of that in Japan.

PA: What brought you to Japanese manga and animation?

FS: I was a student in a Japanese university in 1970 and a lot of my friends were reading manga. I just was wandering what they were reading and why it looks so interesting. I picked some comic magazines up and I thought they were a lot of fun. I became hooked. I guess my course was a little bit different than a lot of fan today, because I liked comic books, I was a comic books fan but I wasn't a fan with a capital "F". I wasn't a collector, I wasn't a maniacal fan. I really got involved in Japanese comics, I guess, as a way to learn more about Japanese culture, just to get a different perspective, learn more about the language, the way people think. And in the process, I became addicted to manga itself. I'm not nearly as knowledgeable about animation as a lot of people I've met. It's a funny thing to say, but I just don't have the time in my life to watch over Japanimation. In the Con here, I love watching animation in a hotel room, but animation is linear, sequential. You sit down and you have to watch it for two hours in order to see the show. If you pick a comic book or a manga and you're a fast reader maybe you could zip through the thing in fifteen minutes or somebody else can take two hours. In animation, once you started watching you have to watch at the pace it was designed to be watched. So, if you want to watch all *Nadia*, it's gonna take a long time! (Laughs) Although I like animation, it's harder for me to see as much as I would want. And I find comics that I can jump into whenever I have a free moment.

PA: You can actually take them with you...

FS: You can carry them around. It's like a walkman, it's portable entertainment. (Laughs).

PA: From where came your interest, or fascination for the Japanese culture that made you decided to be a translator and an interpreter?

FS: Well, I'm used to live in Japan. I lived there 7 or 8 years. I was there when I was 16 years-old.

PA: With your parents?

FS: Yes. At first, I hated it, but I'd been there a while. I ended fascinated by it. Also, I lived overseas all my life. I was always fascinated by other cultures, others languages. Japan, in a way, is quite different from western culture. It's not part of the Judeo-Christian culture. A lot of the view and a lot of the perspective are different. It's important, I think, for us, because if we think that everybody should think the same

way in Judeo-Christian world, that's a mistake. There're many different ways of thinking. I think of Japan, China, and there're other countries: Africa, India. They can show us new ways of thinking. That's what I like. Maybe if I had gone to Africa when I was 16, I would be fascinated by African culture... (Laughs)

PA: How were you brought to do the translation of the *Gundam* novels?

FS: I knew Mr. Tomino. I worked as an interpreter many years ago when he came to San Francisco to do a lecture at a local Japan Society. I think it was at BayCon. I met him and became friend with him. I kept in touch with him but I never thought about translating *Gundam*. But then it was strange because the editor at Del Rey/Ballantine, Risa Kessler (she has left now), also handled the *Robotech* novels. They're written by two people under the pseudonym of Jack McKinney. They had a real success with that and sold a lot of copies. They were really encourage by that. Risa Kessler was thinking that it would be nice to find another project like *Robotech*. She learned that in Japan the *Gundam* series is this huge phenomenon not only with animation but also merchandise like toys, books and everything. When she knew that there were novels already written for that series, she thought that it could be interesting. I think that she got my name from somebody at Lucasfilm (because I sometime interpret for people there, and she knows them because they published the *Star Wars* books). She called me up. Since I knew Mr. Tomino, and since I had written a book on manga and a book on robots, this looked like a nice combination: robots and manga. If you put that together you would be ending up with *Gundam* (Laughs).

PA: Will there be a sequel to *Gundam M.S.* novels? Maybe the five *Zeta Gundam* books?

FS: I think that Ballantine Books haven't any project for the *Zeta Gundam* novels. They will probably wait to have more feedback on the sales of the first series before taking any decision. Or, if they have projects, they didn't ask me to do the translation.

PA: Why did you keep the Japanese pronunciation, like "Sha" instead of "Char"?

FS: I got a lot of criticism from fans about that. I read the original and saw the animation in Japanese, so, in my mind, I didn't had the English spelling. That's why

I went for the original. As I explain in a letter to a couple fans who criticized my decision to do that, when I first began the *Gundam* books, it was several years ago (it was two, three, or more years ago when I first agree to do this). At that time, the spellings in the American anime fan community were not unified. Maybe most of people said "Char", but in some fanzines you'd see a slightly different spelling. It's also the case for a lot of other characters, or the enemy empire, Zeon. I know that in a lot of fanzines now it's spelled "Jion", "Zion", or sometime "Xion". I've decided because things were not unified and there were different spelling in existence that I should just ignore what was here and tried to create something which was as faithful as possible to the original. I didn't expect that it would offend some fans. I regret that it disappointed some people but I think that the fans would understand that the spelling they are used here is not the spelling they are used in Japan. They are only spellings that some fans arbitrarily decides, or they are spellings that graphic designers in Japan, who were putting together the boxes' top illustration for plastic kit, used because they thought it was interesting or cool. And, as they don't speak English, they just picked up something that look great. As a lot of people know, of course, the in-joke is that Sha Aznable comes from Charles Aznavour [a well-known singer in France — CJP]. It somehow didn't seem appropriate to have Charles Aznavour being out in space. I could have spelled the last name, Aznavour, the way it's spelled in French, but it wouldn't seem appropriate.

PA: How is it pronounced in Japanese?

FS: It's pronounced Aznavour. It's the same. I probably should have spelled it the way it spelled in French. But I thought, that, to American, it just wouldn't seem right if the bad guy (or the good guy depending on whoyou like) in the story was so identifiable as Charles Aznavour. Anyway, I had to make a lot of decisions. "Jion", for example: I know that's the spelling that a lot of fan had adopted, but I thought it looks a lot better with a "Z". It has a much harder ring, and sounds more powerful, but I didn't want to spell it "Zion" because it has too many connotation in the US thinking [Zion, or Sion is another name for the Jewish nation; zionism is a political movement for the development and expansion of Israel — CJP]. I thought that "Zeon" was the best choice.

PA: There is a lot of confusion sometime in the name's translation. When Japanese puts names in romaji there's no distinction between "L" and "R". We've seen sometime "Rera Sun" instead of "Lala Sun". Or there's the case of "BubbleGum Crash" or "Crush".

FS: In the case of "Lala", if you translate it literally, it should be with an "L", but if a Japanese fan who doesn't know English is writing to an American fan he could spelled it "Rara", or even spelled it "Dada" because it's very close to the Japanese pronunciation. I thought "Lala" was kind of identifiable to American people. One problem with *Gundam* is that lots of names are so unusual. Even in Japanese you can get confused. I thought, in lot of case, "Why not go for the spelling that is easier for people to remember and seems logical". But people can use any pronunciation they want. I've tried to explain my point of view in the introduction of the novels, because I was a little afraid of what people could say. In fandom, people become very emotional about certain things.

PA: What do you think of the actual orientation and situation of the Japanese anime and manga. Like this increasing taste for eroticism and violence...

FS: I think it's important that people in North America and English-speaking

countries realize that animation and comics in Japan are full fledged medium of expression; they're just like novels and live action films in North America. And you can have anything you want. So there's a tendency for North American (in particular, because we grew up with a lot of censorship)... there's a tendency for us to think, because it is a comic, it has to be this way, or because it is animation, it has to be that way. And that's really unfortunate. There's also a tendency to bring over things that North Americans really want to see but they can't get in their country like erotic animation (because we don't have that here), or to bring over things that people are really used to; some sort of super-hero oriented stuff. I just hope that people in English-speaking countries realized how vast the material is in Japan, because you get anything you want. You can get trash, you can get literature, or wonderful animation. I hope that people can be exposed to the whole range.

PA: Thank you, Frederik Schodt.

FS: Thank you, guys, I really appreciated it.

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This interview was made by Martin Ouellette and Claude J. Pelletier at AnimeCon '90 in San Jose.



SYNOPSIS & DESIGN

GUNDAM F-91

Battle — Space Age 0123, 30 years after Sha's *coup d'état*, no major war was seen in the terrestrial sphere. Corruption in the U.T.G. (United Terrestrial Government) was increasing but no one seemed to be against it. People carried on life in the moment of peace and began to think it was going to last forever. The story starts from Frontier IV of Side IV, one of those peace enjoying colonies.

It was the time of the school festival held by central Colonial School. Boys and girls were putting all their energy into the event. Some of their parents were excited for them but were also worried. It seemed to forebode that the peace they had been enjoying was soon to be destroyed.

By coincidence, some unidentified war ships were coming close to Frontier IV at the same time. Actually, they were C.V. (Crossbone Vanguard), a group determined to fight against the UTG and to reform Earth. They were led by the Ronah's advocates of Cosmo Aristocracy who were about to occupy Frontier IV in the name of the attainment of his ideal. The attack upon Frontier IV began under the command of Dorel Ronah, one of the Ronah's heirs. The surprise attack was a great victory and they attempted further attacks on the United Defence Army to win complete control. It was too late for the UDA when they found out the situation and started their defence.

Complete Introduction — The new M.S. (Mobile Suits) are 2-3 meters shorter than existing models. This was attained by miniaturized beam generators, nuclear fusion, and a drive mechanism. The first mass-produced utilities were all-purpose fighting RGM-109 Heavy Gun designed by Anaheim Electronics. Compared to existing models, more guns could be deployed in the same hangar space, due to their compactness. These new models were highly welcomed by generals and commanders-in-chief, as well as pilots and mechanics who were engaged in front line battles, because fighting potential was expected to improve.

F91 was produced as an experimental model designed for post Heavy Gun. This new technology wasn't developed by Anaheim as it was supposed to be, but by SNRI (Strategic Naval Research Institute), an internal organization of the United Force which had developed the F71G canon and the F90. It is uncertain how this happened. Normally the budgets are determined when contracts are written if private companies are consigned for such productions, but in this case, SNRI took the consignment. As their budgets and talented scientists were plenty, it was possible to employ the most advanced technology such as the beam shield and the bio computer. The bio computer, amongst other things, was developed with the latest technology that belonged to the government's top secret

information. There was no other existing MS carrying this. What made it so superior compared to other computers is the quality of calculation speed, disposing management, and data exchange between digital and analog systems. Pilot navigation techniques are what is most important when fighting in third dimensional space while controlling such complicated human-shaped MS, but having advanced technology is undeniably advantageous. Yet, the true effect of the system was still unknown when applied, especially when connected with bio sensor and his beyond animation, even for the scientists themselves. Neither C.V. nor Anaheim had succeeded in developing bio-computers of a corresponding size that are loadable on MS.

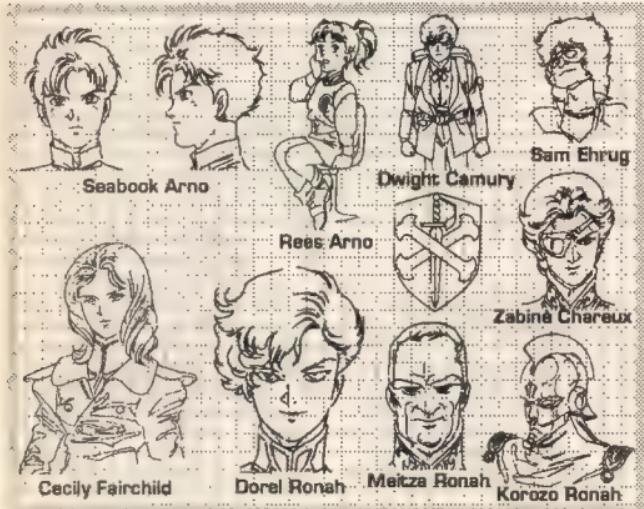
In short, the F91 was the best MS available.

And there were some people spying on either side as it is evident that the beam shield, developed by C.V., is employed for the F91. So it is only matter of time before this new technology will be handed down to C.V.

Portrait — Most of the crews on the training ship **Space Ark** were refugees from Frontier IV, including Seabook Arno, a future F91 pilot, and a few remaining UDA soldiers. They were going to fight against C.V. at least for the time being. As members of the UTG, it should be natural for them to fight against C.V., but the situation was rather complex. For Seabook, there was no choice but to fight against C.V. in order to protect his family and friends. As for his friend Dwight, he was considering going over to C.V. The UTG was not a very attractive existence for most of the young colonists who were ruled from distant Earth, which had no specific ideology. C.V. in contrast appeared to have strong and clear ideas. Regardless of actual ideology, there are always many young people who are attracted by easily understood "ism-group" such as Nazism, Communism, etc.

For the interested audience, the history of C.V. is described in detail in the book, told by Meitza Ronah, the general of C.V.

Round Island. This is an early style of round colony. It was constructed as a



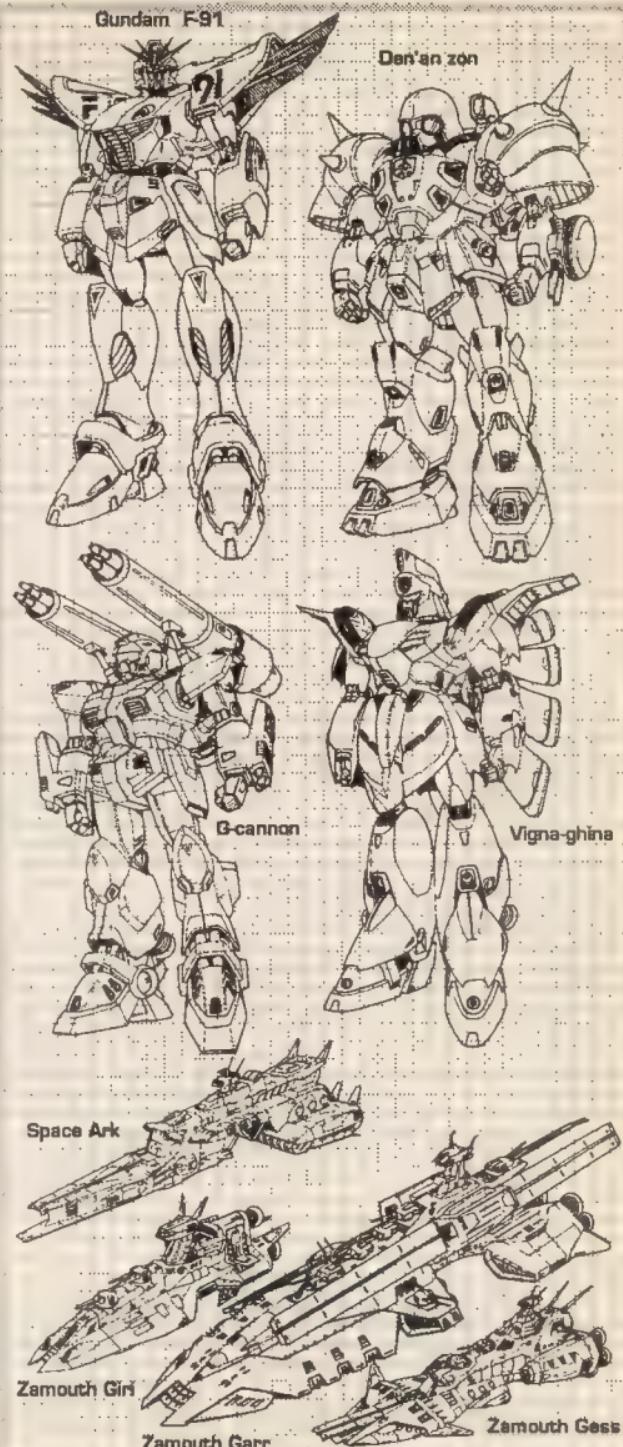
foundation for building open mirror-style space colonies which are the most popular style now in use. It is one kilometer in diameter and was rotated in high speed in order to develop inertial gravitation. Meitza inherited this enterprise from his father. It was only a small old-fashioned colony, but it was the result of hard work to obtain it within two generations. Today, there stands Buhho Company's head office, and some thousand of their employees and their families live there.

This aerial territory would be described as a remote village in Earth terms. It was situated very vulnerably out of a Lagrange Point, therefore course correction had to be made repeatedly. Its position was behind Side One of the moon's orbit. Meitza was 30-years-old when this colony was completed. Far from the Earth, there were many years of continuous maintenance. He used this colony as a foothold. Meitza's father Chalm Holst obtained a fortune in his teenage years by running a space junk business with a few waste-collecting ships in possession. There were many destroyed colonies in space after the Zion War. The fortune was made by a collection and recycling business, as well as by capturing rare resources from small planets in outer space. He then bought the family name of the Ronah's, one of the most distinguished families in old Europe. It was partly because the complex he had as an upstart business man and partly because he thought that by becoming an aristocrat it would be possible for his family to show an example of stopping the governmental destruction caused by mass consumption in the terrestrial area.

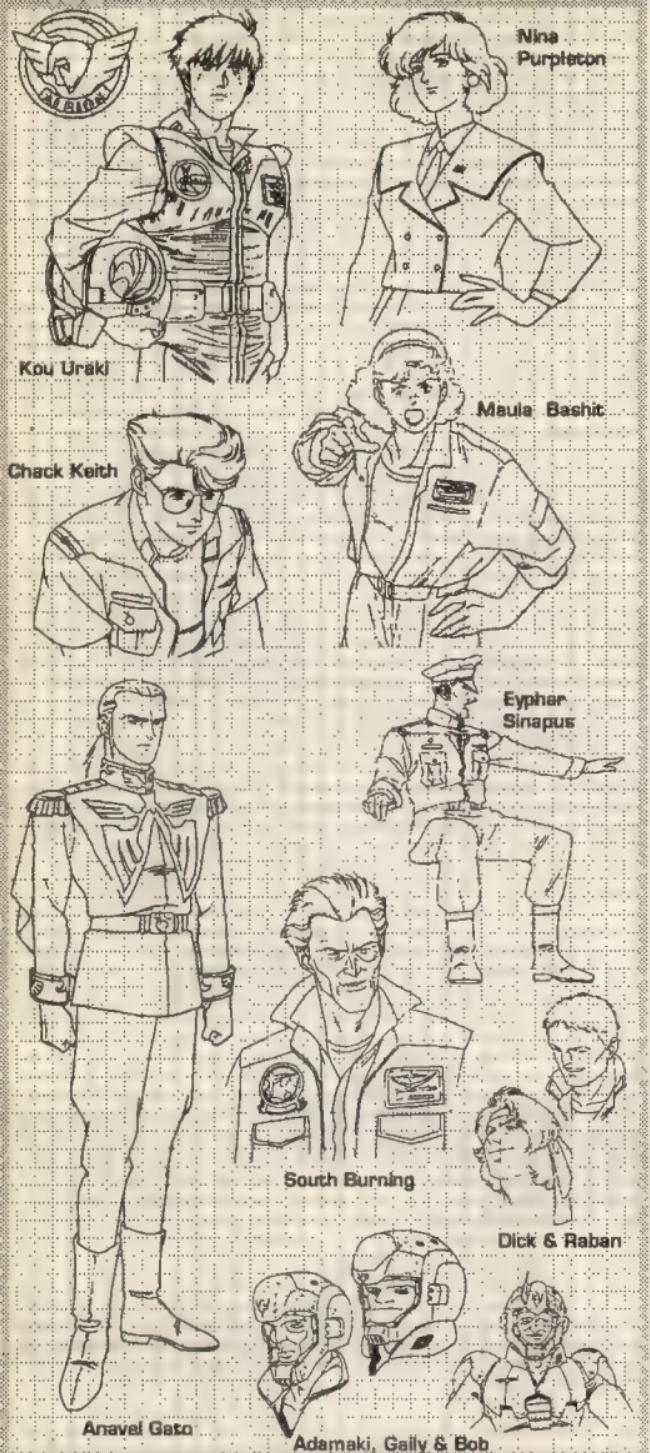
Crossbone Vanguard. The word "crossbone" calls to mind the flags of ancient pirates, but by adding "vanguard" their intention as a political group aiming at social reform is clear.

The Buhho Company needed good organization to train strong staff who could handle hard work such as isolated area development projects and long term expeditions. A special school was established for those who would undertake military training and a company's mechanic test. C.V. was born.

[Translated by Sashimi Sasaki from *Newtype* (1991) 01, pp. 6-8, 11.]



SYNOPSIS & DESIGN



GUNDAM 0083: STARTDUST MEMORY

A new era has begun and as such Bandai/Sunrise Studios has released two new Gundam sagas: Gundam F-91 and Gundam 0083. Gundam 0083 takes place four years after the one year war U.C. (Universal Century) 0079. A whole entourage of new combatants and mecha abound from within this story of the Gundam universe.

The characters are (names listed from Gunbdam 0083 preview book):

Kou Uraki. The newest Gundam hero. Age 19, and an ensign within the U.N.T. Born in space, Kou admired the mobile suits and Federation as an army brat. Having joined the Federation, Kou is a character of strict military discipline - as long as he doesn't interfere with his Gundam's and honor. And yet once again, a young, inexperienced, rash pilot is thrust into the pivotal role of piloting the one and only Gundam (RX-78GP01).

Chack Keith. Kou's best friend and confidant. Chack (referred to some as Jack) is even less experienced than Kou, but still prides himself as a test pilot and ladies man.

South Burning. Lieutenant of the Mobile Suit unit at the Australia test base. A hardened military man, South shows extreme determination and expects as much from his men. An excellent pilot - South pilots a GM unit with the paint style of a Gundam.

Eyphar Sinapus. Commander of the U.N.T. Spacy Whitebase Albion - a sister ship to the original Whitebase.

Nina Purpleton. The cute, yet determined engineer assigned by Anaheim Electronics to oversee the testing of the new prototype Gundam's. She lets very little get in the way between herself and her Gundam's. Born in the space colonies, this is Nina's first time voyaging about on Earth.

Maula Bashit. The large, powerful and yet friendly mechanic assisting Nina with the Gundam's, she is the chief mechanic of the Albion. Just don't get in her way, she probably hits like a pile driver.

Dick Allen and Raban Karcs. Two other pilots in the Mobile Suit squadron.

Tragically, the first two episodes are their last.

Anavel Gato. The main arch protagonist. Gato is feared to be second in fighting ability amongst the Zion ranks to only Char Aznable.

Adamaki, Gally, and Bob. Three of the Zion mobile suit pilots assisting Anavel Gato. Bob, by the way has moved up to the ladder from starring in Mazda commercials to piloting the Xamel YMS 16M.

VOLUME 1

The video opens with the final struggles of the Zion's at Abowaku. Wreckage of cruisers and mobile suits fill the empty void of this sector. Gato, after a dispute with his commander leaves in a Rik Dom.

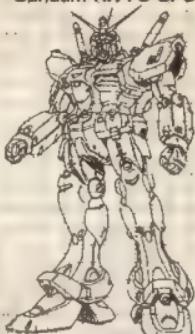
Cut to the open outback of Australia near the Federation Mobile Suit test base. Amongst the wreckage of a Side that the Zion's dropped on Earth in retaliation, three pilots (Kou, Chack, and Raban) in Zion ZAK (Zion Air Kommand) mobile suits undergo a trainee mission. Their objective is to take out Dick Allen in the modified GM-79.

Dick deftly outmaneuvers the trio, as Chack goes topside to confront him. Unfortunately, Chack steps upon a weakened area of the structure and falls, damaging the upper legs and hip section of his mech. Lt. Burning orders the rest of them in to base, after monitoring the events.

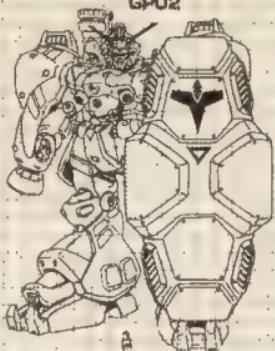
Meanwhile, aboard the Albion, Nina Purpleton looks outward at the vast ocean. Commander Sinapus enters the bridge and comments to Nina that the ocean has grown since the Zion's dropped the Side. The Albion is on its way to Australia, from the Jabaru base in South America, with the new prototype Gundams: RX-78GP01 and RX-78GP02 (hence referred to as Gundam 1 and 2 or G1 and G2 respectively).

Back at the base, Chack is being reprimanded for being careless, by doing situps. The rest of the group looks on at the arrival of the Albion. They ask if the new prototypes are aboard, but South tells them not to assume anything. Chack just finishes up as Kou comes by in a jeep. He is on his way to see if the new Gundams are indeed aboard the Albion.

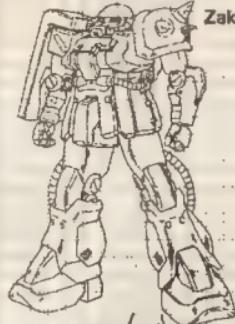
Gundam RX-78 GP01



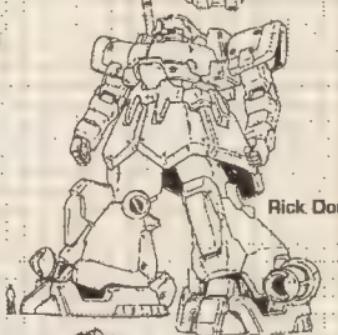
GP02



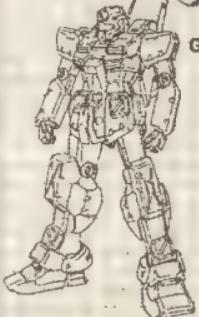
Zak II



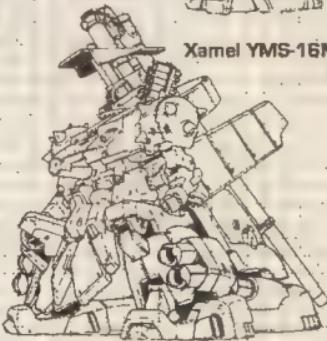
Rik Dom



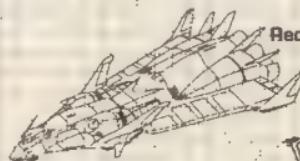
GM



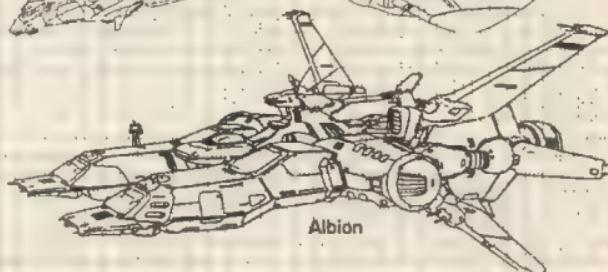
Xamel YMS-16M



Recovery Units



Albion



SYNOPSIS & DESIGN

Meanwhile Captain Sinapus reports in. He informs the base commander that they are looking for a test pilot for the G1 and G2. At the same moment Chack and Kou skid their way to a halt in the hangar bay, surprised and awe struck at the appearance of the Gundam's. Nina decides to question them, as Kou, not noticing her inspects the Gudam's. Chack tries to introduce himself and Kou, claiming to be a test pilot and manage to get a date with her. However, Nina doesn't have the time for a date and walks away. Disenchanted, Chack feels a tapping at his shoulder. Figuring it's Kou, Chack tries to brush him off. Much to Chack's surprise it's Maula, who indeed does have time for a date.

Meanwhile, Nick — Nina's assistant, had informed Nina that he had to go out for a while. It turns out that he is a spy and drives out to meet with Anavel Gato. This takes place while Capt. Sinapus is given the grand tour to inspect security.

At the mess hall, Nina and Maula come upon the pilots having dinner. Maula introduces herself and Nina. But Nina makes an error in discussing the inherent dangers of being a mobile suit pilot. As they get up to leave, they bump into Kou and Chack.

That night, Nick sneaks Gato — who is wearing Federation clothing, into the base. His objective is to steal the G2. Meanwhile, Nina is inspecting the preparations of the suits as Kou and Chack come by once again. Chack has about had it and tries to push Kou towards the door. They then pass by Gato who's admiring the G2, steps upon the lift and raises up to the cockpit section. Nina notices this and demands to know who he is and see authorization. Gato simply smirks and enters the G2.

Powering the G2, Nina grabs the radio and orders him to get out of the suit. Kou, noticing what's happening, informs Chack to warn the base as he runs for the G1. Nina informs him that it is against regulations, but Kou implies there is no time for regulations if they are to stop Gato. At this time, Gato grabs ahold of the G2 shield and switches on the beam saber. Speaking aloud, Gato exclaims that this is the Jion empire and burns through the hatch.

Chack, drives frantically for the base hanger, as the base prepares for attack. As

he arrives the rest are suited up as Chack explains it's a Jion attack. Preparing for battle they march out of the hangar. Dick exits quickly as Raban comes up and stops at the bay door. Adamski, in his Dom Tropen, barrels toward the base. After failing to get a friendly signal from Raban's Zion Zak, Adamski powers up a beam saber and attacks. Raban reacts too slowly and death comes quickly as the Dom's saber slices through the Zak midsection like a knife through butter.

Gato orders the rest to retreat, however, Kou intervenes and blocks his path. The confrontation between Kou and Anavel Gato is just about to begin...

VOLUME 2

Kou and Gato square off against one another as the base is fired upon by Bob in his Xamel. Kou is unevenly matched and no challenge for Gato, who forces him back with the G2's head cannons. Meanwhile, from the bridge of the Albion, Nina looks on in shock: her Gundam's are attacking one another.

Capt. Sinapus orders Kou to retreat and let someone else stop Gato. Kou says there isn't enough time. Pushed back by Gato, Kou can only watch as the G2 leaps away, preparing to follow, the base is besieged by a swarm of missiles, stopping Kou in his tracks.

Nina, still in shock after witnessing her first battle, is calmed by Maula. Kou is startled back to alertness by the voice of South Burning, who commends him from his quick actions. South informs him to step in line as they are forming a posse to search for and bring back the G2 if possible. If not, they are to destroy it. Chack, Kou, Dick, and South head out with Maula and Nina following in a jeep.

Meanwhile, a blip is picked up by the Albion's radar. Scott, figuring it not to be a missile, informs Captain Sinapus. Sinapus, then relays the information to South, since it's probably a shuttle to carry the G2 into space.

Preparing to load the G2 onto the Komusai Shuttle, Bob figures they should hurry, as they are most certainly being followed.

The Federation squad is still searching as Maula argues with Nina about priorities.

Nina, it seems, is only interested in the well fare of the Gudam's and little else. Meanwhile, the G2 is being loaded aboard, while a signal is sent to the Zion submarine Jukon. The submarine captain orders them to hold position till the shuttle is well on its way.

As the shuttle prepares for a take-off, the squad splits up and Chack and Dick sight the ship. Dick prepares for a sniper shot from his bazooka when Adamski attacks from behind. Chack is knocked back and watches in horror as Dick, caught off guard, takes a bazooka shot full in the chest.

Kou wants to head to Chack's aid, but South orders Kou to stop the shuttle. He goes to aid Chack, as he battles the enemies Dom Tropen. Kou leaps toward the shuttle, right over the heads of Maula and Nina. Landing in front of the shuttle, he stretches his arm outward, ready to fire. The shuttle takes off, with Kou in their path: firing the shuttles guns to no avail as Kou blasts a hole in the shuttle's cockpit.

Gato frees himself from the wreckage and attacks Kou. Gato yells that it is the Zion destiny of the Spacenooids to rule over all. Kou is only confused more, since he too was born in space, but doesn't consider himself as part of this Spacenooid deal. Chack and South can only sit and as they realize who their opponent really is. While Kou exclaims that he was born in space, Gato declares that he is still the enemy and attacks.

As the two prepare to battle it out, Bob comes between them. Reminding gato that his mission is to steal the G2 and not enter combat. The two leave the area with the smoldering wreck covering their escape.

Afterwards, Kou finds out about Dick's demise. Chack and he want to take Dick's body back to base. South only informs them that there isn't enough time, else the enemy will get away in the morning.

The patrol continues onward into the morning as Maula and Nina look onward. Meanwhile, the sub has sent out another recovery vehicle to pick up Gato and the G2. Chack is worrying over the coming battle and the possibility of fighting Gato. South reassures him, when suddenly Chack fires at a nearby rock formation

SYNOPSIS & DESIGN

thinking it was the enemy. At that moment, Adamski's Dom attacks Chack. However, Kou rushes forward slicing the Dom's bazooka in two. Leaping over the Dom, Kou accidentally falls into a water inlet. The Dom isn't out of commission yet, and with its beam saber slices the head unit of Chack's zak off. Chack, falling aside, thus dodging the Dom killing stroke, retaliates with his thermal-axe and lands a sweltering blow to the Dom's left side, doing critical damage.

Bob prepares to hold off Kou and South as the ship approaches for Gato. Kou, seeing the G2, rushes forward once again

screaming Gato's name. Bob, figuring he is under attack prepares to fight. However, Kou lands atop the Xamel and then bounds off after Anavel Gato. Bob starts to turn to fire at Kou's backside when South, in his GM-79C, attacks (and jumps in a fierce close combat with Bob — CJP).

The fight ensues and Kou is holding his own till he stumbles backward and falls. Nina radio's Kou and tells him to hit the shield of the G2 as that is part of its heat vent system. Kou stabs the shield and it emits steam, trying to compensate (it's rather a cool leak as Kou is covered by ice

afterward — CJP). Gato, figuring it's no longer necessary or a good idea to press the attack, flees atop the recovery vehicle.

Chack exits his battered Zak and rushes to South's GM fearing the worst. A beam saber is sticking out of the backside of the Xamel's cockpit, and slowly shuts off. The GM's cockpit opens to reveal a bruised but still living South Burning.

Nina and Maula arrive to see Kou (standing in the hand of the G1, looking at the sunset — CJP), weeping at the loss of friends and the failure of the battle.

James Meier

(from *Buffalo Crisis #8*)

NOTES ON AUTHOR AND TRANSLATOR OF GUNDAM NOVELS

YOSHIIKU TOMINO

Yoshiyuki Tomino is the creator of GUNDAM. He was born in 1941 in Odawara, Japan. In 1964, he graduated from Nihon University's Art Department and went to work for Mushi Productions as script writer and producer/director for Osamu Tezuka's *Mighty Atom*. In 1967, he left Mushi Productions to become a free lancer, and worked temporarily in commercials to make money, but after two years he returned to animation. He directed several series for TV: *Triton of the Sea* (1972), *Braves Raideen* and *The Star of La Seine* (1975). He also wrote and directed *Sunbol 3* (1977), *Daitan 3* (1978), *The Gundam Mobile Suit* (1979), and *Ideon* (1980). Since 1980, he has mostly been involved in Gundam-related projects (*Zeta Gundam* (1985), *Gundam ZZ* (1986) for TV, *Char's Counterattack* (1988) and *F-91* (1991) as theatrical releases). He has also written and directed *Dunbine*, and *Elgime*, as well as published many novels based on his

animation stories. The original edition of the first three volume series of *Kidō Senshi Gundam* was published in 1979 by Asahi Sonorama, followed in 1987 by a reworked version published by Kadokawa, and a subsequent five-volume *Z Gundam* series. He lives in Tokyo, Japan.

GUNDAM was the most influential animated series of the '80s. It took its roots in the giant robot TV shows for children (*Gigantor*, *8th Man*, *Mazinger*, *Grandizer*, etc.) that used formula-plot stories and giant warrior robots as advertising tools for toys. *Gundam* still shows tall MECHANICS driven by men manipulating levers and pedals in a cockpit, but TOMINO renewed the concept by introducing a strong sense of realism: lots of technical details, complex plots and ambiguous characters, who could die sometimes. Inspired by *Starship Troopers*, a Robert Heinlein novel (1959), he transformed the traditional robots in MOBILE SUITS, a kind of armored suit or piloted exoskeleton. If the series did not receive at first very high ratings, it has generated a large cult following and an impressive paraphernalia: comics, novels, records, technical books, toys, and even stationery. It also introduced very beautiful plastic models of nearly all mecha in the series, with the exact scale and detailed with a great realism.

[Thanks to Frederik L. Schodt for the information he gave me, as well as his articles: "Warrior Robots: The Man-Robot Symbiosis" in *Inside the Robot Kingdom* (New York, Kodansha, 1988), pp. 82-90; "Robotech Roots" in *Robotech Art 2* (Norfolk, The Donning Co., 1987), pp. 110-122; "A Word from the Translator" in *Gundam Mobile Suit I: Awakening* (New York, Ballantine Books, 1990), pp. vii-x.]

FREDERIK L. SCHODT

Frederik L. Schodt is a San Francisco-based writer, translator, and interpreter for Japanese and American corporations. His long-time interest for Japanese culture and technology, particularly his passion for manga and robots, brought him to several manga-related activities: in the late seventies, he co-founded the group Dadakai to translate Japanese comics, and began working with artists such as Osamu Tezuka (the "Walt Disney" of Japan), Ikeda Ryoko, and Reiji Matsumoto. In 1978, with Jared Cook, he translated the second volume of Keiji Nakazawa's *Barefoot Gen*, and wrote the Japanese entries to Maurice Horn's *World Encyclopedia of Cartoons*. In the early eighties, he worked extensively as an interpreter and translator for Osamu Tezuka, and served as a consultant for the animated feature film, *Phoenix 2772*. In 1983, he authored the award winning, now classic book on Japanese comics, *Manga! Manga! The World of Japanese Comics* (published by Kodansha International). He also translated Ryoko Ikeda's *The Rose of Versailles* Vol. 1-2 (Sanyusha, 1983). In 1986, he began writing and publishing articles extensively about robots in Japanese comics and animation. He published many of his views in a book on Japanese technology, titled *Inside the Robot Kingdom: Japan, Mechatronics, and the Coming Robotopia* (Kodansha International, 1988). In 1990, he began writing a monthly column on Japanese comics for the Mainichi Daily News; he also translated Osamu Tezuka's *Crime and Punishment*, published by the Japan Times, and began to translate Yoshiyuki Tomino's *Gundam Mobile Suit* series of novels, volumes 1-3 (Del Rey, 1990-1991). He is currently working on an update for *Manga! Manga!*, and co-authoring a book with Leonard Koren titled *Eccentric Japanese Comics* for Pantheon Books.



SYNOPSIS & DESIGN

DIRTY PAIR

FLIGHT 005 CONSPIRACY

by Ryan Mathews

Flight 005 is preparing for departure from planet Dolz. Once in flight, a violent hijack occurs and a passenger and stewardess are shot. The gunman then turns toward a woman and her little girl. As the girl screams, the plane streaks into hyperspace, and shortly afterward, it explodes.

Back at WWWA Headquarters, an over-excited Goulet briefs Kei and Yuri on their next mission: to investigate the accident. It seems that a scientist named Dormenschtern had been on board that flight, and the authorities want to make certain that he is indeed dead and not kidnapped. The main reason for suspicion is this: although DCL Spacelines Flight 005 was carrying over three hundred passengers, no insurance claims have been filed as a result of the accident. The Angels' attempts at humor only upset Goulet even more. "Please, please, solve this PEACEFULLY!!!!"

On board the Lovely Angel, the Dirty Pair decide to begin their investigation at the site of the disaster, where a Federation ship has parked and begun sifting through the debris. A stubborn officer refuses to give them access to the investigation at first, but then Kei angrily tells him who they are.

Once there, the officer in charge compliments the two as looking more like "nice girls" than Trouble Consultants. Yuri plays this remark to the hilt until Kei silences her with a pinch to a sensitive region.

The commander explains that the scientists are examining the debris for organic matter, in hopes of using DNA matching to determine who was on board the plane.

The Pair try to get some information from DCL Spacelines headquarters on Planet Dubahl, but the Director says that DCL cannot provide the passenger name list because it has been erased. Whether by computer or human error, the director does not know.

The Pair know the shuttle was headed from Planet Dolz to Planet Zahl, so they decide to start searching for information at Zahl. Kei & Yuri take a liking to the space traffic controller at Zahl, but as usual, once he

learns they are the "Dirty Pair", he freaks out.

At the spaceport, they are met by Danny, a security officer for DCL Spacelines. They are quite taken with him. ("At last! Someone who isn't afraid of us!"). Danny has been ordered to assist them in their investigation. He demonstrates that there is nothing wrong with DCL's computer system by calling up the reservation list for an afternoon flight. If the 005 passenger list disappeared, it was intentionally erased. He tells them that the last two passengers used fake names and identifies the listed address as an obscure research laboratory. The Pair decide to check it out. "MROWRI!". "Mughi, you stay here!!"

Kei and Yuri arrive at the laboratory a few hours later. As they open the door, a timer begins counting down from 999. The place looks rather unpleasant, and Yuri does not share Kei's desire to explore. As they explore the facility, they are both startled by a ringing viewphone. Kei answers, and a voice without picture tells them that a bomb has been set and to get out! "But who are you?" Kei demands. Seconds later, the entire laboratory goes up in an explosion. Kei picks herself out of the wreckage, but Yuri is nowhere in sight. Kei shouts for Yuri, but gets no response.

Miserable, Kei drowns her sorrows at a local bar. Danny does his best to keep Kei away from the liquor, but is unsuccessful. Kei orders yet another drink, and this time the bartender drops in a small tablet. Danny wrestles the drink away from Kei and, in order to keep her from drinking it, downs it himself. Seconds later, his face explodes, spraying her with blood. Kei is so stunned that she does not see the bartender aim a gun at her head. Yuri appears and kills the bartender, then criticizes Kei for overplaying her part. Yuri's "death" was a ploy to get the opposition to expose themselves. Yuri gives Kei the bartender's gun, which turns out to be the same make used by the Zahl Secret Police.

With this evidence, the Angels confront the head of the Zahl Secret Police, who explains the following: Dormenschtern, a native of Dolz, had been doing research for Zahl, research which Zahl wanted kept from Dolz. However, nothing can be kept secret forever, and if Dolz found out that Zahl had been hiding information from them, they would

have withdrawn economic aid. For this reason, they closed down research facility once it seemed it could no longer be kept a secret. However, the official claims no knowledge of Dormenschtern being on the flight. Although it is true that Zahl had a very good reason to want Dormenschtern dead, the official says that they would not have destroyed a passenger plane to do it. "We don't operate like that!", claims the official. If he had tried to leave the planet, they would have arrested him, he says. He claims the bartender's gun was stolen.

Back at the hotel, the Pair are informed that a message has arrived for them. Worried about a bomb, they make a shield, using mattresses and the bathtub. Yuri discovers a bug attached to one of the mattresses, so Kei turns up the bathtub radio to drown out their voices. After a brief debate, (Yuri: "Oh, but you're so strong!") Kei is selected to check for boobytraps in the package. Finding nothing, they open the package and discover that it contains a letter from an old WWWA operative named Dick, as well as a small sample of a chemical. The letter describes the chemical as "Ignahi Heat Repellent", and its potential value as a power source. Wanting to find out who is listening in, Kei and Yuri turn the radio down and talk about the information in the letter.

Driving back to the spaceport, the Angels talk about Dick, who retired from the WWWA to be with his family. Their car is then ambushed, first by a large truck with laser cannons, then by several armored hovercycles. The battle rages and comes to an end when Kei calls Mughi for an air strike.

The damaged truck leans precariously on the edge of a canyon. Yuri produces a tape recorder, and they attempt to get some information from the terrified driver. The driver manages to shout out that he works for the Dolz Information Bureau before he is shot by his partner. The truck topples over the edge.

The girls head for Dolz. On the way, Kei develops a theory: Dolz sent a spy to keep an eye on Dormenschtern. When Dormenschtern expressed a desire to leave Zahl, this spy arranged for fake names and got Dormenschtern and his family on board Flight 005. [Note: "Kei's Theory" is the one last thing I don't quite understand. W. E. Kurtz synopsis claims that Dormenschtern's wife, Illya, was this spy, but M. Wakabayashi, who watched this with me, claims Kei said nothing of the sort, although in his opinion it is implied that the spy and

Dormenschtern know each other. Certainly Illya doesn't act like a spy. — R.M.)

Goulet calls with interesting news. Flight 005's "warp recorder" has been found. According to the recorder, Flight 005 took two warps to make a trip that was normally done in one. In between was fifteen minutes of normal-space flight. Plenty of time for Dormenschtern to be spirited off the plane, say the Angels. Not so, says Goulet. Dormenschtern's DNA has been found in the wreckage. It appears he is dead after all. (Yuri: "Let's start from scratch".)

As the Pair arrive on Dolz, they receive a message that Dick wants to see them. Not exactly trustworthy of the message after all they've been through, it is decided that Yuri will go alone. Upon entry, she is promptly restrained by an armchair outfitted with titanium bolts. Her captors identify themselves as the Dolz Information Bureau. However, they explain that they are not responsible for the attack on the girls' truck on Zahl. That was a splinter faction of the DIB, a faction controlled by the infamous Lucifer Crime Syndicate. The leadership of the DIB does not want the information getting out that the mob is partially running their organization, for fear that the United Galactic Police will come in and take over. When Yuri asks why that bothers them; what shame is there if it is only a splinter faction, the leader's reply is "We clean our own rooms."

The leader offers Yuri a deal: she and Kei will lie to their superiors and in return, the DIB will provide them with information on the man who doctored the flight list to make Flight 005 appear full, when in fact the only passengers were Dormenschtern and his family. When Yuri explains that she doesn't negotiate, the agent says she can either take the deal or take a bullet in the head. Yuri: "If you shoot me, you'll pay a heavy price." The agent looks out the window behind him to see Kei in a compact attack chopper. She fires a missile through the window, scattering the agents as well as Yuri. From the outside, the Syndicate commander, who has been monitoring all these events, fires a huge volley of missiles at the room. Kei picks Yuri up, chair and all, and carries her out through the mayhem.

On the roof, Kei releases Yuri from her shackles. They are joined by an anonymous firefighter who throws two fire suits at their feet. Shortly afterward, the firefighter carries two suited figures down to the ground and smuggles them away in an ambulance.

Before long they are well away from the fire, and

the man asks what they were doing there. They tell him they were looking for a man named Dick, and he startles them by announcing that he is Dick. He explains that he had known about the true nature of the whole affair for quite some time and had been waiting for the right moment to act. He also explains that his daughter, Illya, is Dormenschtern's wife.

A Mitsubishi supply truck races toward a Syndicate spaceport. The driver stops when he sees two bodies (Kei and Yuri) lying in the road. When he and his partner get out to investigate, they are sprayed with sleeping gas and dragged back in their vehicle. Kei, Yuri, and Dick don spacesuits and hide in the truck's cargo tank. The driver and his partner wake up, look around, decide they must have imagined the whole thing and drive on.

A Syndicate military space fortress orbiting Planet Dolz: the fortress is driven by a fusion reactor, using Igahl Heat Repellent in Dormenschtern's special application, and is equipped with heavy-duty lasers and various other armaments which draw their power directly from the reactor.

Kei, Yuri, and Dick attack the unloading crew and knock them out. The three find a communications center and locate Dormenschtern, Illya, and Yori, his daughter. They destroy the center, then find a weapons room and arm themselves to the teeth. Dick outfit himself with an arm exoskeleton. Kei leaves an earring in a box of grenades as a homing device.

Kei goes after Dormenschtern, approaching him and quietly informing him of their plan. He did not expect anyone to still think him alive: a clone of his body had been left in the plane to leave the DNA traces. He starts to follow, then quickly turns back and removes a single rod from the reactor unit, saying out loud that it needs to be looked at. Kei and Dormenschtern leave.

Meanwhile, Yuri and Dick have located the family. Kei tells Mugh to come in on the earring she left behind and do as much damage as possible. At this point, Dormenschtern tells her that removing that fuel rod left the reactor unstable and that the fortress will blow skyhigh if the reactor is brought up to full power, news that does not please Kei at all.

Mugh's attack draws heavy fire and severely damages the fortress as one missile strikes the ammunition dump and blows several holes in the fortress hull. The Syndicate commander demands immediate full power from the reactor,

so he can destroy the attackers. The scientists are skeptical, but they oblige, and the fortress is soon alive with energy.

However, as predicted, the removal of that single fuel rod has destabilized the reactor, and a chain reaction begins. The other scientists note the unexpected increase of power, realize what is happening, and run from the room in terror. Mass panic ensues as people fight for escape pods and ships. The commander becomes furious as everyone around him deserts.

Kei [Yuri!] lines a narrow tunnel with explosive tape, while Dick and Yuri [Kei!] temporarily seals the door. Everyone then grabs onto the walls, and Kei [Yuri!] detonates the tape. The explosion breaks the tunnel and explosive decompression takes place, propelling the section of the fortress they are standing in away from the rest of the satellite, exactly as the Angels had planned.

Dick is nearly sucked out of the break, but he grabs on to the structure of the tunnel with his exoskeleton. Heavily armed guards begin shooting at them with heavy-duty rifles. Dick is hit, and his exoskeleton is rendered useless. Kei begins shooting the arms claws away so he can free himself, but makes no progress. Suddenly, a piece of the tunnel breaks away, separating Dick from the rest of the group, then a stray bullet hits Dick and he is thrown into space. (Dick: "Yuri! Kei! Take care of everyone!"). Kei tries frantically to grab him, but she misses, and Dick vanishes into the blackness.

Mugh arrives with the Lovely Angel, and everyone boards. The frustrated Syndicate commander fires a laser shot at the Lovely Angel, but only destroys the section of tunnel they had recently been in. The Lovely Angel flies away from the station, and the commander follows with the gun-sights, trying to destroy the ship. Just as his sights lock into place and he is about to press the trigger, the reactor overloads, and the fortress is destroyed.

+ + +

Three other people should be credited for this synopsis. The first two, Larry Mann and Walter Eric Kurtz III, are writers of earlier synopses for this OVA (I borrow quite a bit from both). The third, Masatoshi Wakabayashi, is a Japanese friend of mine who translated the quotes and helped with the long talk scenes.

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Animag #12

After a long wait, *Animag* 12 has been out for some time now. It features, as principal subjects, a synopsis for the third part of *Yotoden* (CIC Victor Magic/ adventure samurai tale) and part 2 of Mamoru NAGANO's *Five Star Stories* "Clotho, the sleeping witch". Other features are part 2 of the *Armored Trooper Votoms* article by Tim Eldred, "Anime Flashback", and "Mecha-File" (which is on *Heavy Metal L-Gaim*). "*Mango Manga*" explores the universe of *Gokku Midnight Eye*, and "*Anime Ja Nai*" brings to our attention the dying gasps of our favorite (dead) characters. Other interesting bits are "Sounds of the new Earth: The music and vision of Ryuichi Sakamoto", the composer who brought us the soundtrack of *Wings of Oneamise*, and "Animated Plastics" shows you how to build your first soft vinyl kit. As icing on the cake, Trish Ledoux explains to us, in her daring "Editorial Comments", the meaning of "translator".

This issue was a little late (nearly nine months) due to some problems with the publisher, Pacific Rim, that was unable for some reasons to get the magazine out regularly. This problem appeared to be solved by having *Animag* published by Eternity Comics, which is already well established in the anime/manga world. A new issue was announced for December. It seemed that Pacific Rim didn't see it that way, still having a contract with *Animag*'s staff and has undertaken legal action against them. We have met the sympathetic crew of the magazine at AnimeCon and we wish them good luck with this one. I hope the problem will be definitely solved this time and that *Animag* will reappear soon on the shelves!

Gundam F-91

A new *Gundam* instalment has been out for a few months now. Called *Gundam F-91* (Formula 91), my first taste of it was a small publicity at the end of a *Gundam 0083* OVA. It looked just great; the music was very good and the mecha's design was awesome. I was extremely pleased and enthusiastic about it. Imagine! A new *Gundam* movie! So, when someone told

me, "I've got a copy of it", I nearly blew up! My enthusiasm began to inflate... and deflated very fast. What a let down! My personal opinion? It doesn't even reach *Nu Gundam: Char's Counterattack* shoulders. Frankly, as far as I am concerned, much of the action is too far fetched. If we begin with the characters, Seabook and Cecilia are alright, as well as some of the others (like that guy with the eye patch in Crossbone Vanguard) but what are all the kids doing there? And that guy with the glasses looks like he's out of *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle*! The character that truly bothered me was the idiot with the metal mask. Was this really necessary? Some of the technical details were also bothering, like that weird flower-mecha at the end of the movie. It looked like something out of *Ultraman* or *Mazinger*. Not *Gundam*!

Nevertheless, there are some very good points to that movie, like the animation which is first class all the way. The Mobile suits are absolutely amazing to look at (the models are truly a marvel of craftsmanship. Thank you, Bandai!) and the combat scenes are breathtaking to watch. The music is also very good. But, in the end, the movie is just too farfetched and doesn't (in my taste) hold water compared to the other *Gundams*, especially *Gundam 0083: Stardust Memories*. All in all, not a bad movie but a misdirected one. Next time, less flash and more realism will be just fine!

(Come on, Martin! *F-91* was just a dark and cheap sequel, with an action moving too fast, done with the only purpose of selling models. In a word, I understood nothing! But the models are quite nice, you're right! — CJP).

**Gundam 0083:
Stardust Memories**

Following the realistic path of *Gundam 0080: War in the pocket*, *Gundam 0083* has just come out as an OVA. *Gundam F-91* has also been out for a while, and if I ever hear someone compare 0083 and F91, I think I'll make the person eat his or her own socks! There is no possible comparison; 0083 is so superior to F91. It's like day and night. Let's just take the characters: in F91, Seabook Arno gets in the *Gundam*, closes the cockpit and

Wham! Bam! He's a *Gundam* pilot! This guy has even never piloted a mobile suit in his life! Worse of all, he actually manages to zap every Crossbone Vanguard suit in the vicinity. Quite a guy! Kou Uraki, from 0083, is a military MS pilot. Nevertheless, he's scared out of his mind when Anavel Gato (the bad Zion guy), piloting the GP02, bears down on him like a ton of bricks and nearly managed to waste him in a very inelegant way. He is not a very good pilot (or at least an inexperienced one) and often makes big mistakes that make his life a living hell. Just like Amuro Ray.

Realism: that's the difference between 0083 and F91. No matter how much flash F91 has, 0083 always (in my case anyway) manages to be a step ahead all the way (except for some of the suit designs, but that's a matter of taste) with its mix of realism and science-fiction, believable mechas, and, most importantly, characters with depth and personality. 0083 is the rightfull successor of the *Gundam* name. We sincerely hope that the series will meet the popularity it so strongly deserve. By the way, 0083 is written by Yoshiyuki Tomino. Maybe that's why the "*Gundam*" flavor is so strong!

Martin Ouellette



Yoshiyuki TOMINO. *Gundam Mobile Suit vol. II: Escalation*. New York, Ballantine/Del Rey, 1990. 209 p. Translated by Frederik L. Schodt.

The plot thickens and the character interplay deepens in this book, the second in a precedent setting trilogy of Japanese novels translated into English and published by Ballantine Books.

Based on the 1979 television series *Mobile Suit Gundam*, creator Yoshiyuki Tomino has fleshed out his story of space colonization, giant robotic war, and humanity making the next steps in their evolutionary development. The saga of the *Gundam Mobile Suit* takes place in 0079 of the Universal Century of mankind's growth into the void beyond the blue/green orb of Earth. To solve the immense problem of overpopulation on Earth, the national governments off-world united their strained resources to build huge artificial colonies that orbit around the Earth and the moon. Called Sides, these satellites in time became the homes for almost 80% of mankind. With this reality came the eventual desire of the many Sides' inhabitants for cultural and political independence from the governing influence of Earth. The Earth's leaders did not agree and tragically, this division ultimately led to mankind's first stellar conflict—a monumental war that involved the use of a unique new weapon, the giant humanoid robot or Mobile Suit.

Perhaps the most powerful of these amazing battle machines is the prototype *Mobile Suit Gundam* and its pilot is young Amuro Rey, an inexperienced teenager of 16 years. Despite his youth, Amuro, in a very short time, has become a veteran *Mobile Suit* pilot, admired by his comrades in arms and feared by his enemies in this deadly space war. Part of the reason or this quick success is Amuro's growing ability as a Nw Type.

New Types are the living embodiment of the next revolutionary step for mankind. A this new era in the history of mankind continues, more and more men and women are born with an expanded sensory perception of the world around them and, more importantly, a telepathic link with others like them. Regrettably, the discovery of these unique individuals comes at a

time of war and instead of these abilities studied and utilized to unite the people of Earth and the stars, they are exploited by the leaders of the opposing forces in a conflict that could destroy this future society.

As the *Gundam* story continues in Book II, Amuro is coming to realize this fact after meeting and losing a fellow New Type, Lala Sun, who touches his heart with her beauty and her New Type affinity, and breaks his heart when her life is lost. It is all the more painful for the reluctant soldier because he is responsible for her death. The encounter between these two new humans is a very brief one, 10 or 20 minutes, but Amuro learns much from the tragic Lala, about her, about himself, and about the reality of being a New Type. Amuro will be haunted by the psychic memory of Lala Sun throughout *Gundam Book II*.

Escalation centers on developing the characters of this story. The *Mobile Suit* battles take a back seat as the reader gets to know more of the men and women of this war. It is this characterization that marks the obvious difference between this novel trilogy and the original animated series it is based upon. Like *Awakening*, Book I, the relationships between the many characters are written with more details added than could be seen or interpreted from the TV or movie series.

But there are surprises. A prime example of the discrepancy in the animated series and the novels in Book II's introduction of Kusko Al, perhaps the major supporting character in *Escalation*. Kusko is a flirtatious young New Type soldier of the Zeon military whom Amuro meets after being rescued from space and detained by an enemy warship. With her help, Amuro destroys his captured Core Fighter craft, but later battles her in his *Gundam Mobile* suit as she pilots a deadly Elmeth mecha.

Kusko is a very important character in the book but she **never** appeared in the animated series! Needless to say, for fans of the animated *Gundam* saga, this can be cause for continued confusion. It certainly was for this *Gundam* fan, but I got used to it.

Another surprise is the deepening romantic relationship between Amuro and the lovely

Saila Mass, a plot development also unseen in the anime version. It is a pleasant surprise for me because Ms. Mass is perhaps my favorite character in the *Gundam* story. A fascinating and troubled woman torn between her loyalty to the Federation government and her secretives to the Zeon Archduchy, Siala is another important element to Book II and the entire tale of stellar civil war.

Still another cause for some confusion deals with the *Gundam Mobile* suit itself. While in the animated series, Amuro pilots the white giant robot throughout the entire storyline, in the continuity of Book II, Amuro receives a new and improved mobile suit, redesigned with magnetic coating to eliminate mechanical friction. This new mobile suit also has its armor painted gray to better camouflage it in the void of space.

But even with these little bits of confusion, it is these reworkings and revisions of the original *Gundam* continuity that make these novels by Yoshiyuki Tomino so enjoyable in their own right. To fans of the *Mobile Suit Gundam* saga in all of its many an growing incarnations, to fans of Japanese animation and to fans of grand science fiction adventure, *Escalation*, Book II in the *Gundam* novel trilogy, comes highly recommended.

Yoshiyuki TOMINO. *Gundam Mobile Suit vol. III: Confrontation*. New York, Ballantine/Del Rey, 1991. 213 p. Translated by Frederik L. Schodt.

Yoshiyuki Tomino's futuristic saga of destructive civil war in space reaches its devastating climax in *Confrontation*. As is the case with the finale of any story on such a large scale as this one there are surprises... and the ending of this book is a **shocker**!

As *Confrontation* opens, the conflict between the Earth-centered government of the Federation and the space colonies controlled by the Zeon Archduchy has come to a critical juncture. Gran Zavi, the ruthless Zeon military dictator, has completed the reconstruction of an abandoned colony, Maher, secretly turning it into a colossal weapon called the solar

ONE MAN, TWO PATHS

CYBERSUIT ARKADYN



by Tim ELDRED and Jonathan JARRARD. Issue 1 (of 6) Available MARCH 1992
from IANUS Publications. \$2.50 US (\$2.95 Can).

REVIEWS

Ray Cannon. With this fearsome device, he plans to wipe out the remaining Federation fleets converging on the giant umbrella-shaped asteroid base Abowaku and the other threats to his plan for total domination of the human race: his sister, Krishia and his brother, Dazzle. Thousands of lives lay in the balance, but Gren Zavi believes that their death are a necessary sacrifice for the future he envisions for mankind.

But fortunately there are men and women on both sides of the war who don't believe that Gren or the rest of the scheming Zavi clan are worthy leaders of humanity, or worthy humans either. This opposition is perhaps strongest in the slowly emerging New Type of human beings, young individuals who have been born with a remarkable enhancement of their mental and reflex abilities. Two of the lead characters in the *Gundam* saga are New Type and rivals: Amuro Rey, the amazing teen pilot of the Federation Gundam Mobile suit, and Sha Aznable, pilot of the crimson Zeon giant robot, the Rik Dom, called the Red Comet.

Although Amuro has been his deadly enemy throughout the space conflict, circumstances brought on in part on their developing New Type abilities make Sha realize that somehow joining forces with his foe may be the only way to ultimately save the human race from annihilation. The obvious problem is that Amuro is his sworn enemy and convincing him of his sincerity will be an extremely difficult task.

The situation is compounded by the "newness" of Amuro's still-growing New Type abilities. Amuro is a very young man, not yet 20 years old, and while the realities of war have forced him to do some quick maturing, his emotions are still those of a teenager. He is learning to become a soldier and to use his New Type abilities in the midst of battle and this can lead to tragedy. Amuro has been touched by the consequences of war (told in details in *Gundam* Book I and II), and he is still haunted by them. Amuro is a reluctant warrior but a deadly one nonetheless.

Also, while Amuro recognizes his burgeoning New Type abilities, he doesn't fully understand them, almost to the point of not believing he is a true New Type. This

is an aspect of the New Type concept that comes up repeatedly in *Confrontation*, as it did in the preceding novels.

But for the opponents of the Zavi family and the war itself, time is running out and author Tomino depicts their desperation in space battle after space battle. The political machinations of the Zavi dynasty, the venerable hope of the Federation's leader General Revil in the young crew of the Pegasus II (called White Base in the animated version *Gundam*) and their continued bravery in the face of overwhelming odds involves the reader in the story.

Amuro and his comrades, Kai Shiden and Hayato Kobayashi, in their gun cannon Mobile suits, as well as his other friends, Saita Mass, Bright Noa, and Mirai Yashima, onboard the huge horse-shaped warship, are all in the thick of the war's biggest campaign. Add the threat of the Solar Ray Cannon's great laser blast enveloping them at any moment and *Confrontation* becomes a page-turner of a novel.

And the finale!! I won't even attempt to divulge the surprises contained in this book's last two chapters, but I am confident that followers of this trilogy and fans of the original animated *Gundam* will be rereading specific passages in *Confrontation*'s final pages to be sure they read them right!

But as *Confrontation* brings to a close this exciting novel trilogy, one thing should be pointed out about Tomino's *Mobile Suit Gundam* saga. It is a tale of war—and all that short, three-letter word implies. It is not a romantic tale of good guys versus bad guys, where the rights and wrongs of this conflict are spelled out in simple black and white. It is a tale of tragic proportions on a cosmic scale, where at a time when humanity is on the verge of climbing a historic rung on the evolutionary ladder, it is also embroiled in a sad clash of wills that threatens to destroy all humankind before that next step can be achieved.

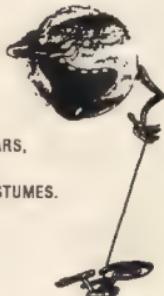
Like any good storyteller, Tomino creates characters in its stories we grow to care about, who become more involving in the story than the giant robots, the space ships and the many battles. As we read his books, we hope that the characters come through the war all right. But in the end, it is to Tomino's great credit that we, his readers, are not given a sanitized version of war. This is the legacy of Yoshiyuki Tomino's epic *Mobile Suit Gundam*: truth.

Ballantine Books is to be commended for publishing these extra special and (equally important) highly entertainly novels. I hope they are successful enough for Ballantine to bring more such books to an appreciative audience here in America.

Lester Swint
(from *The Rose* #27)

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Palladium Books® Presents

ROBOTECH: Southern Cross on videocassette

For the first time ever, Palladium Books® will release the 24 episodes of ROBOTECH™: Southern Cross starting October 1991!

That's right, this fall the Southern Cross portion of the Robotech trilogy will become available on videocassette. Just like the ROBOTECH™: New Generation series, each videocassette will contain three (3) complete, un-edited, episodes. Each box will contain new artwork and each tape will be of the identical, high quality as the New Generation videocassettes.

Southern Cross takes place 20 years after Macross. The REF has left Earth defenses in the hands of the *Armies of the Southern Cross*. A military force that has had little combat experience, but is smart, energetic and possesses a variety of new mecha. Earth is in seemingly capable hands. Then disaster strikes.

The Robotech Masters invade Earth! The Armies of the Southern Cross rise to valiantly meet the challenge of this new alien attacker, but are not prepared for the superior firepower and advanced robotechnology at the fingertips of the malevolent Robotech Masters.

The most notable characters include Dana Sterling (Max & Miriya Sterling's daughter), Bowie Grant (the younger brother of Claudia Grant of SDF-1 fame), the cyber-punk Louie Nichols, the tough Nova Satori, the fatherly General Rolf Emerson, the benevolent Supreme Commander Leonard, and the enigmatic Zor Prime (a clone of the original Zor!)

Mecha includes the Veritech Hover Tank, Veritech Copter, Veritech Logan, as well as other war vehicles, jets, spaceships and battloids! Lots of great fight sequences in space and on the ground! The Robotech Masters' troops include the cold and evil Masters, themselves, the strange mistress of the Cosmic Harp and a legion of new mecha called Bioroids. Plus the Robotech Masters' giant Mothership, Robotech Assault Carrier, Bioroid Hover Sled, and Bioroid Terminator!

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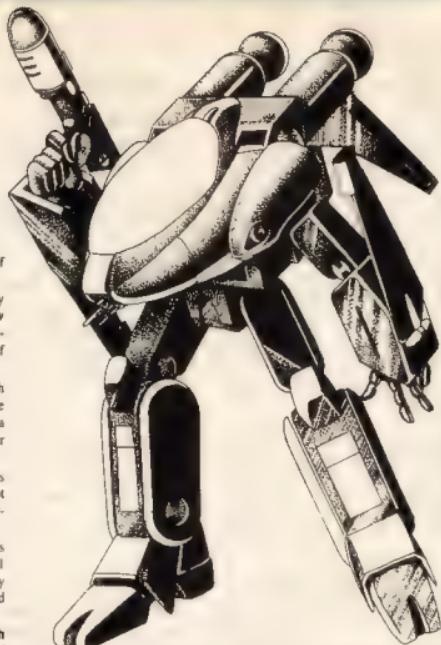
Both ROBOTECH™: The New Generation and ROBOTECH™: Southern Cross will be available from Palladium Books®, Inc. throughout all of 1991! Don't let anybody tell you that they aren't available, because we will keep them in stock. If you can't find the tapes in your favorite store (available at comic book and hobby shops throughout the US & Canada), you can order them directly from Palladium Books! For \$24.95 plus \$5.00 for postage & handling; about \$30.00, the same as in the stores. Please allow four to five weeks for delivery (there's no wait if you get your favorite store to carry them)

ROBOTECH™: Southern Cross Videocassette Schedule of release

Volume One: Contains episodes 37: *Dana's Story*, 38: *False Start*, and 39: *Southern Cross*. Our story opens with the graduation of several new cadets in the Army of the Southern Cross, including Dana Sterling and Bowie Grant. Dana reminiscences about how her parents first met and the Macross saga is loosely recapped. But story telling is interrupted by the invasion of the Robotech Masters and ensuing battle with the new alien attackers. Hover tanks and bioroids in action! Available late October 1991!!

Volume Two: Contains episodes 40: *Volunteers*, 41: *Half Moon*, and 42: *Danger Zone*. More combat and adventure in space and on Earth as the ensuing war begins to heat up. The Masters want something but nobody can figure out what it is. The mystery continues, but spirits are high, the Southern Cross appears to be on a roll. Available December 1st, 1991.

Volume Three: Contains episodes 43: *Prelude to Battle*, 44: *The Trap*, 45: *Metal Fire*. Dana leads her squad into the alien mothership where they experience a number of strange things, encounter Musica, mistress of the Cosmic Harp, and barely escape a trap! Civilians are taken hostage and turned into the zombie-like pilots of bioroids. Zor is captured and the mystery and madness thickens. Available Mid-January, 1992.



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U.S.A., Inc. Copyright 1982 and 1983 and 1985 respectively.

Volume Four: Episodes 46: *Star Dust*, 47: *Outsiders*, 48: *Deja vu*. Dana continues to exhibit a bit of empathy and psychic hunches and can not shake certain feelings about the captive bioroid pilot (Zor). Available late February, 1992.

Volume Five: Presents episodes 49: *A New Recruit*, 50: *Triumvirate*, 51: *Clone Chamber*. It is decided to induct Zor into the Army of the Southern Cross. A full scale assault is launched against the Masters. Zor, Dana and Bowie get closer to the secret of the Robotech Masters and protoculture. Plus epic space battles! Available late March, 1992.

Volume Six: Contains episodes 52: *Lover Song*, 53: *The Hunters*, 54: *Mind Game*. Louie Nichols creates the Pupil Pistol. Dana is involved in more intrigue, while the savage space battle continues, with exciting fight sequences involving the Veritech Copter. Available late April, 1992.

Volume Seven: Presents episodes 55: *Dana in Wonderland*, 56: *Crisis Point*, and 57: *Day Dreamer*. The continues to escalate, with terrible consequences. Zor seems to be going mad. Dana is becoming more rebellious. Bowie finds love and the mystery continues. Available late May, 1992.

Volume Eight: The Conclusion of the Southern Cross series! This is it, the final showdown with the Robotech Masters, the decimation of Earth, death and sacrifice, hard decisions and a terrible glimpse of the thing to come. Includes episodes 58: *Final Nightmare*, 59: *The Invid Connection*, and 60: *Catastrophe*. Available June or July 1992!

Approximate running time: 66 minutes for each volume
VHS! Sorry no Beta. Sorry no laser video-discs.
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Suggested Retail Price: \$29.95
Mail Order directly from Palladium Books: \$24.95 plus \$5.00 for postage and handling, per each episode

ROBOTECH™: The New Generation Videocassette, Volume 8! Available now!!

New Generation, Volume Eight contains the final four episodes of Robotech the television series. The REF fleet returns to battle the Invid. Scott Bernard fights Corg in a battle to the death, and the climactic battle of Reflex Point! Seldom seen on TV! Never before on videocassette. New Generation/Invid Invasion, Volume Eight is a must for all Robotech fans. Volume eight costs \$39.95, contains four (4) episodes and is unedited.

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IANUS NEWS

We are really sorry for the delays on PA 13, the cursed issue. It is the first issue of PA to be THAT late. The reasons are the usual: production delays (because of Project A-Kon, reduced staff for the summer, I moved the office almost alone, etc.), we changed our printer, UPS Canada was on strike, Canada Post was on strike, and Canadian border officials were on strike. We will try our best to never be more than one month late). By the way (!), the *Anime Shower Special #2* is late, and will not be released before January (six months late, oops!).

This issue (#15) is also quite late for another kind of reasons: I found myself alone to do all the work. Alain got a teaching job in a College (lucky guy!) and Michel quit for personal reasons. He will still do some work with us later, but was absent for the last months. Nevertheless, there's no need to worry. The solution was to strengthen (sooner than expected) our ties with New Order Publications. Now, PA is produced by an all new team. I am sure it is for the best. The restructure of the two companies took us some time, but we will catch up the delays soon.

Ianus will publish in 1992 several new projects. The first one is *Cybersuit Arkadyne*, a 6-issue comic book by Tim Eldred (*Broid*, *Lensman*, *Captain Harlock: Deathshadow Rising*) that will be published monthly from March. Later in the year, we will publish *Star Riders*, a delirious space opera in comics by two young talents. There will be other comic titles, Poster-Zines, and special projects (maybe one on *Robotech*) still to be confirmed. Our NEW ORDER branch will continue publishing *Mecha•Press* and several gaming products (among other: *Techno-Police 2100 A.D.*, an Appleseed-like game). More on that next issue.

PA #16 will be the all-fantasy issue and will focus on *Record of Lodoss War* and *Aura Battler Dunbine*. There will be also a *Mekton* optional rule for Magic. Watch also for the new size and format of the magazine: the same size than *Anime V* magazine (8 1/4 x 10).

Claude J. Pelletier

ROBOTECH NEWS

Robotech Genesis

The Waltrip brothers strike again! They will publish this fall at Eternity Comics a new six-issue mini-series: *Robotech Genesis: The Legend of Zor*. It will be the first Eternity Robotech title not to carry a *Robotech II: The Sentinels* subtitle. The owner of the rights, Harmony Gold U.S.A., used to be quite stiff about their property. They've probably seen the light and got slack so Eternity could strike that deal with them. It will open a lot of possible new side stories. Jason and John will alternate writing and drawing this title. (From *Comic Shop News* #213).

CJP

Southern Cross on Tapes!

For the first time ever, Palladium Books will release the 24 episodes of *Robotech: Southern Cross (The Robotech Masters)* starting October 1991! These cassettes will include *Robotech* episodes 37 to 60. They tell the story of the Southern Cross Armies who stayed on Earth after the departure of the REF, and their fight against the Robotech Masters, who have come to claim what the Zentraedi failed to recapture: the Protoculture Matrix. The new army is not prepared for the superior firepower and advanced robotics technology of the Masters, but the soldiers are young, smart, and energetic (like Dana Sterling, Bowie Grant, Louie Nichols, and Nova Satori), and they possess a variety of new mecha (Hover Tank, Logan, AJAC).

Just like the *Robotech: New Generation* series, each videocassette will contain three (3) complete, unedited, episodes. It's a MUST for serious *Robotech* collectors and fans. All eight tapes will be released on a four (4) to six (6) week schedule until all the tapes in the series are out by Spring 1992 (late Oct., Dec. 1st, Mid-Jan., late Feb., late March, late April, late May, July). All tapes are high quality, VHS only, in full color, unrated, and have an approximate running time of 66 minutes. Kevin Long will illustrate the first video box. Till February 1st 1992, Palladium will offer a subscription to the entire *Southern Cross* series: \$230 for all eight tapes. You can order each tapes for \$24.95 plus \$5 for postage & handling (allow 3 to 4 weeks for delivery). The tapes are also available in most comic and hobby shops. (From Palladium Books).

ANIMATION

Anime Fandom In France

Anime and manga are hot in France. They have two fan associations (Animart and Sumi), three zines (*Anime-Land*, *Mangazone* and *Sumi Jooohoo*), and even a Japanese Library (Librairie Junku, 262, rue Saint-Honoré, 75001 Paris, France). It's understandable since lots of animations are translated and broadcasted on French TV: *Robotech*, *Dragonball*, *St-Seiya* (*Les Chevaliers du Zodiaque*), *Fist of the North Star* (*Ken le survivant*), *Grandizer* (*Goldorak*), *Ulysse 31*, *The Rose of Versailles* (*Lady Oscar*), *Galaxy Express 999*, *Urusei Yatsura* (*Lamú*), *Maison Ikkoku* (*Juliette, je t'aime*), *Kimagure Orange Road* (*Max et Compagnie*), etc. They will soon broadcast *Ranma 1/2*, *Shurato*, *Patlabor*, and *Nadia*. *Akira* is also playing in theater since May.

They also discovered manga: the translation of *Akira* began a while ago. They've published also Otomo's *Dormu* (*Rêve d'enfant*) and they soon plan to publish *Nausicaä* and *Appleseed*. They are not alone: in Italy they are translating *Akira*, *Ken*, *Bach*, *Crying Freeman*, *Lum*, *Mai*; in Spain they're publishing *Akira*, *Horobi*, *Grey*, *Kamu*, and *Xenor*; we can also find *Kamui* in Sweden and even *Mai* in Brazil.

Sumi Jooohoo is the bimonthly newsletter of Animart and Sumi Associations. They welcome any suggestions, ideas, and criticisms from the fans and any relevant information concerning shipping dates, content, and synopses of publications or productions about anime and manga. Contact: Association Sumi, 62, rue Rachais, 69007 Lyon, France.

CJP



Battletech Replay

The Japanese Dragon Magazine is talking about a story called *Battletech Replay*. It is written by Hiroshi Ootori & Group SNE, illustrated by Kennichi Sonoda (BGC), and the mech designer is Shouji Kawamori. Is this just a book or is this an animation? An animated story would be a marvelous news for RPG & mecha fans! *Dragon* is showing four character designs by Sonoda, and two mecha designs by Kawamori.

CJP

Detonator Orgun

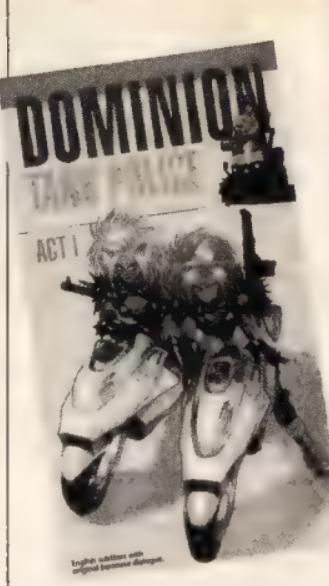
A 3 parts SF mecha action series taking place on 23rd century Earth, in city #5. With technology, large controlled peaceful cities could exist on Earth, but fortune teller Kumi predicted that something would destroy that peace. Orgun is an alien robotic life form piloted by a "chosen" student named Tomoru. Part I is 60 minutes and was released in August. (From *The Rose* #28).

F-91

The latest *Gundam* movie, produced by Sunrise, is now out. 30 years after *Char's Counter-attack*, the young Seabook Arno, student on Side 4, is dragged in a conflict initiated by Meitza Ronah, the leader of a politico-military organisation wanting to transform the Earth federation in an utopic "cosmo babylon". Arno will be involved in the conflict when his girlfriend is kidnapped. He will have to fight her, after she has passed to the enemy side, leading the Crossbone Vanguard under the name of Vera Ronah. Arno will flee on another colony and will join the Formula 91 project. This movie is produced by the "old" *Gundam* team: Yoshiyuki Tomino is director, Yoshikazu Yasuhiko is character designer and animation director, and Kunio Okawara is the mechanical designer. (From *Sumi Joooh* #1).

Nadia, The Movie

The Nadia movie will take place two years after the end of the TV series, in 1892. Nadia is a 17 year old lady working in London trying to be a reporter. Supposedly she has grown up and become more mature. There will be a new female character, Fuzzy. She washed ashore on a beach in Southern France and Jean found her. She is the daughter of a famous scientist. They do not know the reason why she washed ashore. But, for some unknown reason, Grandis was after Fuzzy, who becomes the key to solving some large mystery. (From *The Rose* #28).

**New Video Company**

Central Park Media, under direction of John O'Donnell, will embark on two separate ventures to bring translated anime to American home video audiences. One venture will be called US Manga Corps which was officially launched at the VSDA convention in July. Its first release will be *Dominion*. To expand its market, US Manga Corps will itself with VPI/Harmony, which is distributed by BMG Distribution. In another venture, Central Park Media has exclusive distribution agreement with US Rendition to distribute *Black Magician Appleseed*. In the agreement, US Renditions will help promote US Manga Corps in comic shops, while Central Park will help in video channel distribution for US Renditions. (From *The Rose* #28).

Pallabor OVA #6

The story unfolds like this: There has been a lot of terrorist activity aimed at labor factories. Then one day there is an explosion at the Tokusha Nika. But it turns out to be caused by a gas leak instead. The bath is destroyed, so the dairin shotai have to go to a public bath. On the way, they see a policeman who was beaten up by a terrorist. There is only one place where the terrorist could have hidden: the public bath, and there are only five men in it. However, they don't know what the terrorist looks like. The only information

that they got was that the suspect had three moles in his armpits. So the dairin shotai go around trying to find the man with three moles. This OVA was released in June.

Only the odd-numbered volumes of the *Pallabor* OVA series are relevant to the Griffin storyline and are complete in 4 volumes (#1, 3, 5, 7). All the others are individual short stories. The last one, "Game Over", concludes the Griffin story. (From *The Rose* #28).

Vancouver Animation Club

The Vancouver Animation Club offers the subtitled versions of all 48 episodes of *Kimagure Orange Road* (12 two-hour tapes or 4 six-hour tapes). It has also subtitled: *Orange Road Surf & Snow OVA set* & *Mogitate OAVs* (1 two-hour tape) and the *Orange Road Music Edition*. Arctic Animation, a sub-committee of Vancouver Animation, has completed subtitles for: *ARIEL Visual 1&2*, *Assemble Insert 1&2*, *Gall Force 3 Stardust War*, *Pallabor The Movie*, *Pallabor OAV P-1* (and episodes 1-3), *Sol Bianca*, *Dirty Pair Project Eden*, and *Record of Lodoss War 1*. The shows can be obtained by either: sending blank tapes plus \$5 each for return postage OR by sending \$6 each for tape plus \$5 each for postage. Check or money order in Canadian dollar. Contact William Chow, 2830 East 8th Ave., Vancouver, BC, Canada, V5S 3M7. (From *The Rose* #28).

MANGA***Gunhed* Graphic Novel**

Viz is pleased to announce that *Gunhed*, Viz' first color series, will be collected into a graphic novel and released in October. *Gunhed*, the three-issue bi-monthly mini-series, began in November 1990 and proved to be an enormous success. Huge reorders resulted in issue #2 quickly selling out, and issue #1 and #3 are likely to be sold out very soon.

Gunhed, the science fiction action story of cooperation and, ultimately, friendship between a man and a robot weapon, is based on a hit live-action movie made in Japan. The English version of this movie may finally be released in independent theaters for the holiday season; if so, the film is sure to fan the desire for *Gunhed Graphic Novel* as the ideal Christmas gift.

All of Viz's graphic novels have been distinguished by ongoing high demand, as well as a strong reputation for their high quality. These traditions will undoubtedly

continue with Viz's color graphic novels. *Gunhed Graphic Novel* will carry Viz's Top Graphic Novel imprint, and will have 136 full-color pages at the retail price of \$14.95 US. (From a Viz Press Release).

Heavy Promotion for *Goku*

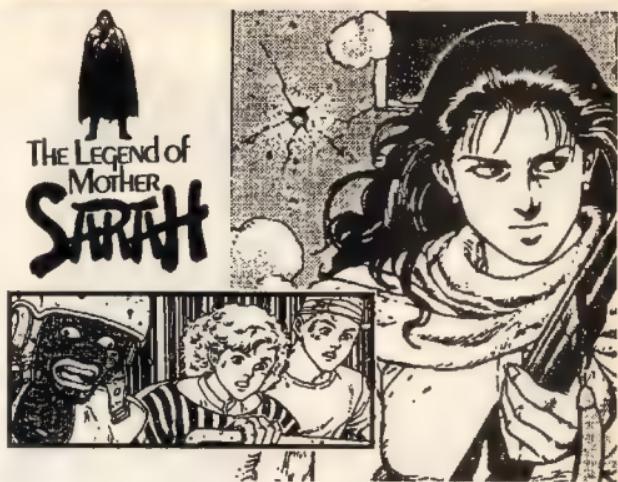
Viz was delighted to herald the release of *Midnight Eye* #1, their 5th full-color title! *Midnight Eye: Goku, Private Investigator* is currently one of the most popular manga in Japan. It is a mature futuristic crime story about a dauntless ex-cop who mysteriously acquires a super-high-tech right eye. It features the strong graphic art of Buichi Terasawa, creator of *Cobra*. Dramatic action sequences rive the reader's attention and whet the appetite for more of the same. This story moves like a bullet.

Viz had not only heavily promoted this title at the San Diego convention with Terasawa's presence (who displayed at his own booth his drawings, had autograph sessions, and showed English highlights of the 8-disc laser disc set of *Cobra*) but also used the *Midnight Eye* video, a color poster, and a special full color issue of *Viz-In*. With all this promotional attention, they surely expect the sales to be very high.

Midnight Eye is a six-issue monthly series, translated by Fred Burke and Matt Thorn, lettered by Wayne Truman, and colored by Monika Livingston. Each issue has 40 full color pages in square-bound format, and retails for \$4.95 US. It is intended for MATURE READERS, and is carrying Viz's Premiere Comic imprint. To be released in September. (From a Viz Press Release).

Latest Shirow

Masamune Shirow stopped momentarily his work on *Appleseed*, in 1989, to begin a new story that was serialized in *Young Magazine Special*, and that will soon be published as a Maki (graphic novel). This story, *Kouaku Kidoutai*, happens after the fourth world war. The world is dominated by an asian bloc lead by the Japanese and protected by the elite Japanese police: the SHELL task force. Some member of this group received cybernetical implants allowing them to fight terrorist groups even better. We can expect this story to be translated by Studio Proteus and published by Eclipse Comics in a near future. (From *Sumi Joochoo* #1)



Legend of Mother Sarah

Epic will publish another manga at the beginning of 1992. *Legend of Mother Sarah* is written by Katsuhiro Otomo (*Akira*), who also designed the costumes. Other designs are by Takashi Watanabe and the manga is drawn by Takumi Nagayusu (*Ai and Makoto*). The story of over 1,000 pages is being serialized in Japan's *Young Magazine* and the English edition will be made by the same staff as *Akira*. The English adaptation is written by Jo Duffy, and Marie Javins is the editor. It is colored with a computer process by Steve Oliff.

The survivors of the nuclear war fled to a space colony. Seven years later, a proposal to make the southern hemisphere habitable by altering the Earth's axial tilt ignited a civil war. The EPOC faction wanted to accomplish this with bombs, while ME (Mother Earth) insisted the Earth had been damaged too much already. People left the battle-torn colony and returned to Earth. During the chaotic exodus, ME member Sarah was separated from her children, and was imprisoned by EPOC for 10 years while the civil war intensified. Now, in this post-nuclear world, Sarah travels with a wandering merchant, Tsuetsue, on a quest to find her family and, as a mother and as someone from the "older generation", tries to prevent her children's generation from making the same mistakes as her own. (From *Poster-Zine* #1).

Manga Debated

TOKYO (AP) — When a group of mothers stormed into his office to express outrage over the sale of pornographic comic books to teenagers, Jinen Nagase's initial reaction was to dismiss the fuss as prudish nonsense. "But I became angry when I saw the books", the national legislator said. "High school students are openly depicted as objects of sex, and it's too much when the depictions are extreme, abnormal, and unimaginable in real life." Nagase, who represents Toyama state in central Japan, has become a leader in the growing national effort to protect minors from salacious comics that are found everywhere in Japan.

Whether prohibiting sales of the comics to minors encroaches on free speech has emerged as an issue for national debate. Television specials and countless newspaper and magazine articles have been devoted to it. The comics in question have titles like *Virgin Shock*, *Food for the bed* and *Let me feel it, Baby*. They depict sexual acts, including incest and sadomasochism, sometimes even setting their stories in classrooms. About 470 million comic books, or *manga*, are published in Japan each year and many are pornographic. A study by the Tokyo city government found about half the comics examined contained sexual material. Commuters read them on subways. Children pass them around in school and leaf through them in convenience stores, where porno comics rub covers with *Doraemon*, Japan's Mickey Mouse. "What is appealing about comics is that they are so unreal," said Osamu Mizuno, 17. "My friends look at adult comics out of curiosity to see

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what they are like. There is group pressure to read them. You wouldn't be able to keep up with the topics of conversation if you don't read comics."

Isako Nakao, who is 49 and has three children, leads the group credited with starting the anti-comics campaign. "The sexual acts portrayed are very violent and obviously degrading," Nakao said. "It is absolutely shameful for women." Her organization, in the southern state of Wakayama, is demanding enforcement of a state ordinance that forbids the sale of comics that government officials consider harmful to youngster. Other communities with similar ordinances have followed suit, compiling a list of about 2,000 comic books they feel are undesirable for minors. Selling pornographic comics to children is punishable by fines of a few hundred dollars, but none have been levied so far. Police have arrested owners of three well-known stores in Tokyo for carrying comics that violate laws against depicting genitalia.

Masaru Yamano, a comics editor at the Kodansha publishing company, argues that the proliferation of suggestive comics merely reflects the broadening scope of the industry. Yamano said he found hypocrisy in criticism from television stations whose programs he declared to be equally explicit. He acknowledged, however, that some comics have "gone too far." Many publishing companies have recalled their most explicit comics and volunteered to exercise self-restraint in the future. Kodansha was the first major publisher to put "For Adults" labels on some of its more graphic material. Parents and government officials say the labels are too small and do not appear on enough comics.

Many artists see the label as a stigma. An official at the Tokyo-based Research Institute for Publications said that the literary community fears it threatens free expression. Those who defend the comics point out that sex is part of growing up. Kyoko Okazaki, a comic writer, was quoted in the mass-circulation daily *Asahi* as saying: "I don't know what the mothers are afraid of. Do they think they can control the sexual urges of their children?" (From an article in *The Miami Herald*, titled "Racy comics steam Japanese parents; prohibition debated".)

Meanwhile, Japanese are reading manga!

A survey by a Japanese pollster reports that 90% of Japanese senior high school students read comics regularly, compared to 10% of

their American counterparts. Also, male Japanese high school students read more mecha and science fiction-oriented stories, while female counterparts read more romance stories. Surprisingly, sport-oriented stories in manga are losing popularity with both male and female students. (From *The Rose #28*).

Nestrobber

Jo Duffy, writer of the English adaption of *AKIRA*, has recently co-created *NESTROBBER*, a new comic series drawn by Japanese illustrator Maya Sakamoto. *NESTROBBER* is the story of Raptor, a former career soldier who has been living in peaceful retirement for over fifteen years. When he returns from a business trip and finds that, during his absence, government agents have destroyed his home, murdered most of his family and friends, and kidnapped certain of the survivors, Raptor comes out of retirement, determined to avenge the victims, rescue the survivors, and find out why the government has kindled such a cold-blooded atrocity.

NESTROBBER marks the North American debut of artist Sakamoto, and is one of the first comics to be drawn by a Japanese artist from an English language script. Its initial presentation will be as original material for the North American market, rather than as a translated reprint adaptation. The publisher and release dates for *NESTROBBER* will be announced in the future.

Robert Fenelon



Wrong author?

Kia Asamiya, who was credited as author for *GUNHED*, would be in fact only the publishing director. The true author is Michitaka Kikuchi, or at least, his studio. It seems frequent in Japan, when an entire studio work on a series, that only the most important writer/artist is credited on cover. Michitaka Kikuchi is not well known in Japan, even if he worked on series like *Silent Möbius* and *Dark Angel*. (From *Sumi Joochoo #1*).

MANGActually

The expected manga, manga-like and anime products for October and November:

Antarctic Press: *Albedo #2, The Starlight Agency #2-3, Ninja High School 5th Anniversary T-Shirt, Zetraman #2, Mangazine #11.*

Castle Graphics: *Kimber, Prince of the Felons #2.*

Dark Horse: *Outlanders #32-33, The Venus Wars #5-6*

Eclipse: *What's Michael? #3, Dirty Pair II: Dangerous Acquaintances Limited Edition.*

Epic (Marvel): *Akira #32, Akira TPB #3.*

Eternity: *Captain Harlock: DeathShadow #4-5, Ninja High School #28-29, Robotech II: The Sentinels Illustrated Handbook #2-3, Robotech II: The Sentinels Book II #9.*

First: *Lone Wolf & Cub #49.*

Ianus: *Anime Shower Special #2, Akira Poster-Zine (relist).*

Innovation: *3 x 3 Eyes #3.*

New Order: *Mecha-Press #2, #1 (relist).*

Viz: *Silent Möbius #3-4, Crying Freeman III #4-5, Midnight Eye: Goku, Private Investigator #1.*

and the usual Japanese magazines: *Animage, Animedia, Anime V, B-Club, Hobby Japan, Model Graphix, Newtype.*

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●	Anime Shower Special #2	\$4.00 US, \$4.55 Can, \$4.75 US oversea
●	Cybersuit Arkadyne #1	\$3.25 US, \$3.75 Can, \$4.00 US oversea
●	Cybersuit Arkadyne 6 issues	\$19.50 US, \$22.47 Can, \$25 US oversea
●	Gates of Pandragon #1	\$3.00 US, \$3.48 Can, \$3.75 US oversea
●	Mecha-Press #1	\$4.25 US, \$4.82 Can, \$5.00 US oversea
●	Mecha-Press #2	\$5.75 US, \$6.42 Can, \$6.50 US oversea
●	MP Subscription 6 issues	\$25 US, \$29.96 Can, \$32 US oversea
●	Poster-Zine #1	\$4.75 US, \$5.35 Can, \$5.50 US oversea
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Masamune Shirow's cyberpunk comic series is now a Japanese animation feature! Deunan and Briareos are SWAT members in the futuristic Olympus. A group of terrorists want to cause unrest between the humans and biroid population. Explosive high-tech warfare and suspenseful drama dominate this SF story! Red Foil Hot Stamp limited edition cover and "longer life" video makes for the highest quality! Some strong language.

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